

---

# **World Council of Churches**

## **Commission of the Churches on International Affairs**

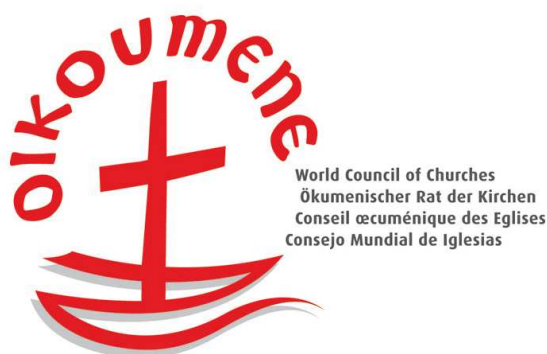
### **United Nations Advocacy Week & Global Platform for Theological Reflection 2009 Report**



***Churches Together to Transform the World***

**Church Center for the United Nations  
15 - 20 November 2009  
New York**

---



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

United Nations Liaison Office  
777 UN Plaza, 9D  
New York, NY 10017  
United States of America  
T: 1.212.867.5890  
F: 1.212.867.7462  
E: [unlo@wcc-coe.org](mailto:unlo@wcc-coe.org)  
<http://unaw.oikoumene.org>

**WCC General Secretary: Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit**  
**WCC Director of Public Witness: Dr. Mathews George**  
**WCC Representative to the United Nations: Rev. Christopher Ferguson**  
**WCC Programme Executive for GPTR: Rev. Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala**  
**WCC UNLO Programme Associate: Ms. Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee**  
**WCC UNLO Intern: Ms. Meron Meshesha**

### **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to the UNAW Planning Team from the WCC and the ecumenical community at the UN in NY – in especially the Lutheran Office for World Community, Presbyterian UN Office, the Chaplain of the Church Center for the United Nations (CCUN) of the Women's Division – United Methodist Church, Mennonite Central Committee and Caritas Internationalis – whose efforts in organizing UNAW made the 5<sup>th</sup> UNAW a success. We are also particularly appreciative of all speakers, presenters, moderators, worship leaders, participants and the many volunteers who took time out of their busy schedule to advance the ecumenical voice at the United Nations. We are thankful for our Spanish and French interpreters Mr. Don Reasoner and Ms. Laurette Nsanze, respectively. For this report, we are deeply indebted to Ms. Karen Sinclair, Dr. Guillermo Kerber and Rev. Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala for taking notes during UNAW; Mr. Mark Beach for providing photographs and audios recordings of the week; Rev. Kathleen Stone for writing the worship sections; and for Mr. Jonathan D. Garcia, Ms. Karen Sinclair, Ms. Eryn A. Bailey, Ms. Ann Daphe, Mr. Jason Asbury, Ms. Karen Flores, and Mr. Vilijus Jankauskas for reviewing parts if not all of the report. We are grateful for the Salvation Army who produced the printed copies of the report.

### **Using the Material**

Materials in this resource may be used for advocacy and educational purposes, provided no changes are made and the reprint is not for sale. Digital copies of the report are available for download at [www.unaw.oikoumene.org](http://www.unaw.oikoumene.org).

### **About the World Council of Churches**

The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, today the WCC brings together 347 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches representing more than 560 million Christians in over 110 countries, and works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church.

### **About the World Council of Churches United Nations Liaison Office**

The World Council of Churches United Nations Liaison Office (UNLO) at the UN Headquarters in New York works to make the voices of the churches and ecumenical organizations heard in order to influence the policy decisions made at the United Nations. The UNLO places special attention on ensuring that a common ecumenical perspective is developed and communicated and that the voices of the ecumenical community of the Global South and most specifically the voices of victims are heard.

## **Table of Contents**

### **Executive Summary**

### **Foreword: *WCC Representative to the United Nations***

### **I. Introduction**

### **II. *Setting the Context For Ecumenical Advocacy***

- a. Sunday Preparations and Opening Worship
- b. Opening Remarks and Introduction to UNAW-GPTR 2009
- c. Keynotes Addresses: Charge and Challenge to the Churches

### **III. Ecumenical Advocacy Priorities**

- a. Thematic Priority I: Climate Displaced Peoples
- b. Thematic Priority II: Indigenous Peoples' Rights
- c. Thematic Priority III: Colombia

### **IV. Engaging as One: *Ecumenical Advocacy in Action***

- a. WCC United Nations High-Level Reception
- b. Mission Visits: Working Together as One

### **V. Setting Common Strategic Global Ecumenical Advocacy**

- a. Regional and Thematic Caucuses
- b. Closing Keynote Addresses
- c. Closing Plenary
- d. Closing Worship
- e. Evaluation

### **VI. Global Platform for Theological Reflection Report**

### **VII. Annex**

- I
  - UNAW Planning Team
  - Schedule-at-a-Glance
  - Annotated Agenda
  - Programmatic Document
  - Speaker Biographies

- 
- Participant Analysis
    - Participants Info List
    - Participant Evaluations
  - **II: Speaker Presentations**
  - **III : Worship Resources**



## Executive Summary

"If we really are to make progress that we desperately need in the coming years we will need a broad mobilization, and I personally don't think it will happen unless you, the World Council of Churches, and all the churches you represent, as well as the religions more broadly speaking, are part of this effort."

- Mr. Olav Kjørven,  
Assistant Secretary-General, UN

The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches convened its Fifth Annual United Nations Advocacy Week (UNAW) on November 15-20, 2009 in New York City. UNAW 2009

brought together 80 global ecumenical leaders from 35 countries and 18 confessions to raise the voices of the churches on three critical issues needing urgent attention at the United Nations: Climate Displaced Peoples, Indigenous Peoples' Rights and the situation in Colombia. As a follow-up to last year's theme on Climate Change and the upcoming COP 15 negotiations in Copenhagen, UNAW delegates, with the participation of the Pacific Council of Churches, engaged in common advocacy on the rights of Climate Displaced Peoples at the United Nations.

Unique to 2009 was the partnership with the WCC's Global Platform for Theological Reflection (GPTR) that took place immediately following UNAW, from November 20-22, 2009 in Long Island, NY. The theme for GPTR 2009 was "Praying, Speaking Out and Acting Together – Theological Reflection on Advocacy." GPTR utilized an inductive approach using the concrete advocacy during UNAW 2009 as a catalyst to help rearticulate the theological rationale for advocacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the spirit of the 2006 Porto Alegre WCC Assembly that emphasized the churches' responsibility in prophetic witness and the role of the WCC at the UN, UNAW 2009 was organized within three foci: gathering the ecumenical community, addressing issues pertinent to the UN, and engaging in advocacy. The Week was structured around four moments: (1) Setting the context for ecumenical advocacy; (2) deepening common understanding of priority advocacy issues; (3) engaging as one in ecumenical advocacy; and (4) setting common commitments to networking and follow up for common strategic global ecumenical advocacy.

### **Setting the Context for Ecumenical Advocacy**

Two prominent individuals offered the Opening Keynote Addresses on the role of the churches in advocacy at the United Nations. The first call came from within the UN: Mr. Olav Kjørven, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of Bureau for Development Policy at the UN Development Programme. For Mr. Kjørven, without the moral and ethical charge emphasized by churches, critical issues like the fight against climate change would not succeed. Mr. Kjørven believes that when religions choose to respond, their impact will be tremendous in shaping the direction of policies, especially in countering the climate disaster.

Ms. Lois Dauway, Moderator of the WCC Central Committee's Program Committee and current Interim Director for GBGM of the United Methodist Church, charged that the battle against injustice was waged through a new

### **UNAW Goals and Objectives**

- to gather global ecumenical partners in a forum dedicated to common strategic global ecumenical advocacy;
- to enhance relationships with ecumenical advocacy partners;
- to strengthen the capacity and understanding of ecumenical partners with regard to advocacy within the UN system;
- to deepen theological and ethical insights on identified priorities;
- to strategize on identified priorities in order to develop a common global ecumenical advocacy platform;
- to put designated advocacy priorities into action by dialogue with Member States at the United Nations; and
- to strengthen ecumenical cooperation on advocacy work at the UN by enhancing active ecumenical networks at the national, regional and international levels.

---

“Just Do It” school of theology. She urged UNAW participants to not only talk about what should be done, but translate what is learned into concrete commitments for action.

### **Deepening Common Understanding of the Three Advocacy Issues**

UNAW participants deepened their common understanding of the three thematic priorities through worship services, presentations and interactive dialogues.

**Climate Displaced Peoples** (CDP) sessions were co-sponsored with the Permanent Mission of Grenada and held at the United Nations, open to member states, UN agencies, and NGOs. In the first session H. E. Ambassador Colin Beck, representing the Solomon Islands and Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and Mr. Jakob Strom representing the Swedish Mission and the European Union briefed the audience on the climate change negotiations. They shared their respective institutions’ perspectives on the situation of climate displaced peoples and potential steps that could be put into action. The second session offered an opportunity for the UN and UNAW community to be abreast of the direct challenges and responses faith communities were taking with regards to climate displacement. Speakers presented case studies of the current and ongoing dire impact of climate displacement in Africa, the Pacific and the United States. Speakers emphasized that ethical and moral dimensions must not be lost in climate change negotiations and called on the international community to foster greater discussion and action in creating international instruments for the protection of not only the civil and political, but also the cultural, economic, social and land rights of climate displaced peoples.

The **Indigenous Peoples’ Rights** (IPR) sessions included information covering the ongoing challenges indigenous peoples face, the role of the UN regarding indigenous peoples, and how churches could be mobilized in the efforts to bring justice to the indigenous peoples. In IPR session I, speakers provided the history of the indigenous peoples’ efforts to introduce language for international instruments at the United Nations, as well as their role in actualizing the UN Declaration of Indigenous People’s Rights (UNDRIP). In the second IPR session, the ongoing struggles faced by indigenous communities around the world were presented. The role governments, corporations and even the churches, have played in destroying the livelihood of the indigenous communities were explored. Speakers challenged the churches to take up their call to solidarity, prophetic witness, and support for the rights of indigenous peoples.

The **Colombia** sessions provided opportunities for speakers to share testimonies of advocacy and their ongoing work for justice and peace in Colombia. These testimonies included efforts being taken to ensure the rights of indigenous peoples, displaced peoples, ethnic minorities and those affected by climate change in Colombia. During the second session, presenters delineated the advocacy imperatives that required solidarity and commitment by the international community. The grave situation of the internally displaced in Colombia and refugees who left Colombia, as well as the important partnership with the UN and faith-based organizations, were stressed.

### **Engaging as One: Ecumenical Advocacy in Action**

Essential to UNAW is the preparation for and active engagement in ecumenical advocacy. UNAW participants had two unique opportunities to engage in advocacy around the three themes and were exposed to a concerted advocacy strategy around the rights of climate displaced peoples.

The **WCC UN High-Level Reception** was one opportunity for direct advocacy with Member States of the UN, with over 27 Ambassadors, representatives of Permanent Missions and UN agencies accepting the invitation. The reception offered a venue for UNAW participants to advocate on the UNAW 2009 themes of climate displaced peoples, indigenous peoples’ rights and the situation in Colombia.

The second opportunity was around **Mission visits**. Building on last year's theme on Climate Change, UNAW 2009 common advocacy priority centered on the rights of Climate Displaced Peoples. As states were preparing to produce a binding climate change agreement, UNAW 2009 participants met with 15 representatives of member states and intergovernmental organizations and pressed for two actions: (a) create international instruments protecting the rights of climate displaced peoples and nations, which includes their political, cultural, social, economic, marine, and civil rights and (b) pass a fair, ambitious and binding treaty at COP 15.

### **Setting Common Commitments to Networking and Follow-up for Common Strategic Global Ecumenical Advocacy**

**Regional Caucus sessions** were key opportunities for UNAW participants to meet within their own regions for regional and inter-regional contextualization, integration, and analysis as they related to the three thematic priorities. A **Thematic Breakout session** provided opportunities for deepening of regional commitments to each theme; the discussions were fed back into the Regional Caucus session for further consultation by the regions. Caucuses presented their conclusions to the large group, which offered opportunities for information sharing, building solidarity and comparing obstacles and advocacy strategies between regions. Many caucuses committed to holding solidarity and awareness campaigns around CDPs and the human rights situation in Colombia and augmenting advocacy towards the adoption and/or implementation of UNDRIP within their governments and churches.

Important to setting the common strategic global advocacy were the **Closing Keynote Addresses** by Rev. Dr. Hyunju Bae and Mr. Paul Divakar. Rev. Hyunju Bae provided a theological charge that UNAW participants are called to the journey of the crucifixion, a quest "to create an alternative space and culture of life in the empire." The transformation of the community was the true miracle of Christianity. Mr. Divakar spoke of the "hidden apartheid" of India toward the Dalit community. He critiqued churches for often failing to include human rights as part of religion. He explained that where layers of exclusion get caught in the invisibility of the human rights violations, it is the role of the WCC to expose such invisibility.

The **Closing Plenary** offered a time to synthesize and develop ways in which the thematic priorities, the proposals generated from the regional and thematic caucuses, the advocacy visits with government representatives, and the relationships formed could be taken home for local, national, regional, international, denominational and ecumenical follow-up action. Many participants emphasized that the success of UNAW would be dependent on the networking and relationships built, and the follow-up work generated after UNAW. Most delegates were appreciative of the wealth of information they received about the three thematic areas and felt capable of returning home ready to create possible linkages with their communities. A number of delegates also called for the creation of a network around each thematic priority so that interested non-UNAW participants have the opportunity to participate in ongoing advocacy work. The plenary also provided a time for verbal evaluation of the week and a time to fill out written evaluations for the week.<sup>1</sup>

UNAW 2009 concluded with the **Closing UNAW/Opening GPTR Worship**. The worship focused on a question posed to the UNAW participants returning home and GPTR participants entering the next phase of theological reflections on advocacy: "What do you carry with you of both the giftedness and the responsibility of having heard these persons?" The worship concluded with the charge "Go forth and pull up your sleeves!"

The document, "Praying, speaking out and acting together: Theological Reflection on Advocacy" produced by the GPTR delegation is included at the end of this report.

...

---

<sup>1</sup> The summary of the evaluations are provided in the Annex of the report.

---

This UNAW 2009 report is a tool to be used in the process of advocacy, to be used to facilitate follow-up action by UNAW participants and interested others. The report highlights UNAW thematic issues, the urgency and the responsibility for participants, churches, and regions working together with the WCC to take action and contribute to the next advocacy steps going forward.

---

## Foreword



**Rev. Christopher Ferguson**  
Representative to the United Nations  
World Council of Churches

---

The World Council of Churches United Nations Advocacy Week (UNAW 2009) met in a time of significant urgency and mounting world crises. Earlier in September 2009, the Secretary General of the UN convened three separate High Level Summit meetings in a single one-week period to address the Economic Crisis, the Climate Change Crisis and Nuclear Disarmament. The world

community and our planet, our Mother Earth, face a massive and unprecedented threat to life.

In a reflection earlier in the year, the then President of the UN General Assembly H.E. Miguel d'Escoto said: "Things could hardly be worse." In detailing the depth and breadth of the impoverishment and sufferings inflicted on the majority of the world's people, Father d'Escoto concluded that as a human community we are "morally decrepit."

UNAW 2009 met at the intersection of two truths; that there is massive exploitation and destruction facing the human and earth community, and that we have an ethical and moral imperative to defend the life of God's Earth, and seek a new world of justice, peace and harmony with all of creation.

Global Ecumenical Advocacy is one response to the moral imperative to act boldly in closing the gap between the abundant world life that God wants, and the domination, inequality and exploitation of the environment that currently exists. Such is an essential part of the Mission of the Church – acting together in addressing injustices and amplifying the voices of the poor, oppressed, and marginalized as they respond to God's call, promise and gift of abundant life.

The imperative tone and resolute call to act was reflected in the blunt and inspiring opening keynote address by Lois McCullough Dauway. She spoke about a "perpetual impatience" with injustice and ruthless greed. She reminds us that there is but one answer for followers of Christ; "Let us love, not in word or speech but in truth and action (1 John 3:17 -18)." Borrowing the Nike slogan, she called the UNAW participants to "Just Do it!" UNAW 2009 was set firmly within the parameters of urgency and the obligation of concerted action.

The themes selected for UNAW 2009 reflect the ecumenical commitment to address issues and situations of injustice in the context of the United Nations in New York. As evidenced by the convening of three gatherings of world leaders in one week to address three distinct crises – the UN in New York is now the global "public square." Regardless of your view on how effective or independent the UN is, there is no doubt that the most important issues facing the world community come here for consideration; for better or worse, for action or inaction, for advancement or paralysis. This is the one space where they come and where 'We the people of the UN' have at least some slim opportunity to hold governments accountable for their decisions made and obligations to uphold human rights, and to guarantee international peace and security without recourse to war.

---

---

Each of the three issues addressed represents a specific dimension of the work of Ecumenical Advocacy. The focus on Indigenous Peoples highlights the considerable achievement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), while at the same time lifting up the scandalous lack of implementation of that hard won declaration by UN member States. Too many churches are woefully ignorant of the systemic injustices experienced by the world's indigenous peoples. UNAW 2009 was challenged to work for adoption and implementation of the UNDRIP by both churches and by UN member states. The power and depth of the witness and spirituality of indigenous people shaped and inspired the whole of UNAW.

The conflict in Colombia represents a shameful and tragic reality not only due to the enormity of the injustices and suffering inflicted on the people of Colombia but because of the utter failure of the international community and in particular the UN Security Council and General Assembly to address the situation. Justice and truth cry out. Many of the churches in Colombia continue to lift up their witness and prophetic ministry over the displaced, refugees, victims of repression and violence, disappearances, and the indigenous and Afro-descent peoples who are forced off their lands and whose traditions and culture are under threat. The ecumenical community was called to act creatively and persistently in ensuring that the humanitarian and political dimensions of this situation find a just and peaceful solution.

The rights of climate displaced peoples represent a specific focus about an issue that was getting almost constant attention. In the period leading up to the Climate Summit in Copenhagen, climate change discussions were pervasive. Building on last year's UNAW theme, UNAW 2009 sought to focus specifically on the people affected by climate change and address the fact that there are no specific or effective instruments to guarantee their rights. Featuring the voices of churches from the Pacific Islands, UNAW made this the special advocacy theme for the event. It was not merely through critical reflection and mobilization of the ecumenical community, but through "hands-on" advocacy in bringing the voice of the churches to influence policy decisions of UN member states on the rights of climate displaced peoples.

UNAW also provided an arena to discuss and coordinate ecumenical Human Rights work while thinking through further ecumenical collaboration in support of the churches in Colombia.

All of this was infused with theological reflection and a deep pulsating spirituality that provoked true prophetic engagement. With a strong presence from the Global South, women and youth, the week was anchored in explicit Christian witness and reflection. Truly, UNAW 2009 overturned the oft repeated lament that ecumenical advocacy work is indistinguishable from the work of any NGO. The clear sense of ecumenical identity, purpose and approach was further re-enforced by the fact that UNAW 2009 was joined with another WCC program this year.

The Global Platform for Theological Reflection (GPTR) had taken Global Ecumenical Advocacy as its theme, and members of that event participated fully in UNAW, ensuring a deep theological dimension to the event. Perhaps even more importantly, worship and prayer undergirded and enriched the week, drawing on the languages, traditions and customs of all the participants.

UNAW is a very specific and focused tool for global ecumenical advocacy at the UN. It is rooted in a long term strategic commitment to work together for change in the context where powers gather to hold one another accountable. We hold them to account and speak truth to power. Therefore, all that we do lives within the arms of a triangle. One arm is the dimension of "**Global Ecumenical**," which defines who we are as churches working from an ecumenical commitment and identity as witnesses to the unity of the churches. We address the whole Oikoumene – global in dimension of the church that is united in action and purpose. The second arm is "**Advocacy**." Our purpose is about making a difference through amplifying the voices of the poor and



---

marginalized. It is not about *speaking for* but *walking with* the oppressed and suffering peoples. Advocacy includes public witness, solidarity and accompaniment. UNAW therefore is not mostly about education, research, leadership training or information sharing. Although all of those things happen, its main purpose is advocacy. The base of the triangle is the **“UN in New York.”** The ecumenical community is constantly involved in advocacy on many, many fronts. But we believe that a strategic focus on the UN in New York is called for, given its nature as the global public square and the only forum for accountability among the 192 nations of the world. So, we specifically focus on the UN during this week.

UNAW is one very specific part of the work that goes on all year where its themes are carried out in many venues – all the issues chosen are part of on-going ecumenical priorities. The three issues require an additional global ecumenical advocacy to be focused at the UN.

This was an intense and dynamic week. It was spiritually rich but filled with pain and urgency as the ecumenical family grappled with dire situations in the midst of deeply rooted systemic injustice.

I commend this report to you. I want to make a special tribute to all the planning committee members in Geneva and New York, to the many volunteers, and a very special word of gratitude to Elizabeth Lee and Meron Meshesha for their superlative work in preparing this report.



## ***I. UNAW Introduction***

Throughout the WCC, both within the ecumenical movement in general and the WCC United Nations Liaison Office in particular, advocacy has become a leitmotiv of ecumenical collaborative work. Currently, the WCC's United Nations Advocacy Week (UNAW) is an evolving model of this ecumenical collaboration.

The UNAW is a particularly significant moment for expressing concerns and addressing questions of power and structural injustice through a concerted and coordinated ecumenical approach to international advocacy. It is a chance to develop and commit to methodologies which coordinate approaches to international, regional, national and local advocacy work.

### **UNAW in context**

Churches have worked since their founding to address the different dimensions and forms of power relationships that impact peoples' lives and livelihoods at the local level. Increasingly, economic, social, political, military, environmental, gender, ethnic, religious and cultural issues intersect and have to be monitored and responded to through a comprehensive and integrated approach. This is equally true for the way in which global realities shape local realities and vice versa.

Today, the imperative to challenge systemic structures of injustice that pervert truth and deny justice requires new levels of ecumenical cooperation, coordination and leadership to undertake transformative and prophetic public witness at national and international levels. The broad constituency base of churches, locally rooted and globally connected, provides a platform for a concerted and coordinated ecumenical approach to advocacy not only at the United Nations but in capitals in nearly every country in the world.

This sets the context with which we approach common strategic global ecumenical advocacy: deepening theological and ethical insights, strengthening ecumenical cooperation, building common strategies, strengthening networks, enhancing communication and developing workgroups on priority issues of common concern with concerted national and international efforts.

As a fellowship representing more than 550 million Christians from over 340 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has been mandated by its member churches to take a leading role in this public witness by facilitating, networking, coordinating and challenging churches and organizations within the ecumenical movement. From this framework, the WCC undertakes a prophetic role with emphasis on the theological and spiritual imperatives of speaking truth to power as part of the global churches' public witness for justice, peace and reconciliation.



2007: Advocacy Discussion

Photo: M. Neuroth/ CWS

### **UNAW: An Advocacy Tool for the Global Ecumenical Family**

The first UNAW took place in November 2003, with the purpose of bringing together ecumenical leaders for a week of mutual sharing and common strategizing. 60 leaders attended, and the group offered a unanimous

recommendation for participants to reconvene in November 2004. Following the 2005-2006 preparations for the WCC Assembly, the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) of the World Council of Churches featured 90 participants from 45 countries, representing diverse constituencies of churches, church agencies and regional ecumenical organizations for the Third Annual UNAW in 2007. The goals of the week were to learn from the experiences of churches and NGO representatives working daily with advocacy at the United Nations, to provide opportunities to dialogue about the issues, and to create opportunities for advocacy with Permanent Missions of Member States of the United Nations. Compared with previous advocacy weeks, this emphasis on advocacy with Member States was a new initiative. In 2007, the WCC chose to emphasize four themes, with particular attention on one of those themes as a primary focus for conducting advocacy. With this in mind, the primary advocacy focus of UNAW 2007 was the Greater Horn of Africa. The week also addressed the additional themes of water, nuclear disarmament, and the Middle East, with an emphasis on Palestine and Israel. Incorporating feedback, UNAW 2008 chose to reduce the number of priorities to three: Climate Change, Migration and Sri Lanka, with the ratification and implementation of the Convention of Migrant Worker's Rights as the common advocacy agenda. The overarching theme for the Week was "Human Rights at 60 years." 125 participants gathered from the global WCC ecumenical community, representing 50 countries and 78 churches and ecumenical partners; 42 percent were women and 60 percent from the Global South. UNAW 2008 welcomed more indigenous people, women and youth than ever before. This increased diversity and representation greatly enriched the discussions throughout the week.



## UNAW 2009

UNAW 2009 brought together 80 participants from the global ecumenical community, representing 35 countries and 18 Christian confessions comprising of the Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Evangelical, Independent, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nondenominational, Old Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Post denominational, Presbyterian, Protestant, Reformed, and United and Uniting confessions and traditions. 43 percent were women, 54 percent from the Global South, 16 percent youth, and 14 percent representing indigenous peoples. UNAW continues to place special attention on ensuring and empowering a strong presence of traditionally marginalized members of the ecumenical family, including voices from the Global South, women and youth. However, due to a decrease in funding sources, UNAW 2009 representation was not as diverse as desired. The sessions of UNAW incorporated simultaneous interpretation into French and Spanish as a means to ensure greater participation with partners from the Global South.

The three priority issues for UNAW were: Climate Displaced Peoples, Indigenous Peoples' Rights and the rights of those in Colombia. As a follow up to last year's theme on Climate Change, the rights of Climate Displaced Peoples was the focus of common ecumenical advocacy at the United Nations.

UNAW 2009 moved through four moments: (1) Setting the context for ecumenical advocacy, (2) deepening common understanding of priority advocacy issues, (3) engaging as one in ecumenical advocacy, and (4) setting common commitments to network and follow-up for common strategic global ecumenical advocacy. The week began Sunday afternoon with an orientation session to the UN, followed by participant introductions and the UNAW 2009 Opening Worship. With the exception of Friday, each morning began with worship focused on the critical issue being addressed for the day, with four sessions during the day to deepen understanding of

thematic issues and prepare for common advocacy. Regional and Thematic Breakout groups sought to relate thematic concerns highlighted with regional concerns and responses for actions. UNAW participants met with Ambassadors and representatives from 15 UN member states, where they urged the international community to take action to protect the full human rights of those who are being displaced and losing their islands due to climate change.

## **UNAW and GPTR 2009**

Unique to UNAW 2009 was the partnership with the World Council of Churches' Global Platform for Theological Reflection (GPTR) programme. Launched in 2007 with a view to create a space for different stakeholders of the WCC (including churches, specialized ministries, ecumenical organizations, and Christian World Communions) GPTR addresses issues of critical importance to the life, work, and relationships within the global ecumenical community and facilitates the sharing of different view points to better understand the differences that arise. The objective is not to produce a consensus statement at each session, but to unpack the issues, their complexities and open up possibilities for further reflection. "Migration: Churches as Sanctuaries of Hope" was the theme of GPTR 2007 and "Bible: Crisis and Catastrophe" for 2008.

In partnership with UNAW 2009, GPTR's 2009 theme was "Praying, Speaking Out and Acting Together – Theological Reflection on Advocacy." This year's delegation was comprised of theologians, experts from UNAW 2009 thematic priorities, specialized ministries, church leaders, and regional representatives. GPTR delegates were full participants during UNAW, actively engaging in programs and advocacy throughout the week. Following an initial introductory session Nov 15 and a midweek session on the evening of Nov 19, the bulk of reflection and analysis took place from Nov 20-22, where the critical issues raised at UNAW would be the basis for an examination on the following ideas:

1. Why advocacy? Re-articulation of theological rationale for advocacy today in the context of massive abuse and destruction of life. Discern a more holistic ecumenical theology of life that does not stereo-type faith responses.
2. Dealing with hesitations and limitations by taking into account the empirical realities of churches and their public space in different contexts.
3. Approaching struggles for life – for human rights, justice, peace, etc., not just as social/ethical issues but as challenges to our affirmation and practice of Christian faith. Ecumenism as "unity in action for life."
4. Reflection on Christian responsibility in situations of injustice, exclusion and abuse of power. Why should only the victims speak out? Why not others? Bridging the gap between preaching and practicing salvation.

## **Worship at UNAW 2009**

Worship at UNAW is a multinational, multi-denominational, multilingual, multicultural gathering, as participants seek to affect political policy and processes. Different rhythms and rituals for prayer and worship are inherent in the gathering's beat. Present are Latin American charismatics, African indigenous Muslim, Eastern Orthodox women, Australian aborigines, United Church of Canada, Colombian Catholics, Quechuan, West Papuan indigenous, and many others. As the Chaplain of the Church Center for the UN Rev. Kathleen Stone said, "We are those who fill the



Tillman Chapel

Photo: M.Short

---

pews each morning to wrestle with God's message to us as we confront some insidious results of political policy and process in the 21st century. But, our hearts yearn for others and our own to beat together, to work together and to move these seemingly intractable political processes."

Throughout the week, the central text for each morning's worship was the story of the Sharing of the Loaves and Fishes found within the political context of John the Baptist's beheading, as told in Mark 6:30-44. Preachers from all over the world, with diverse cultural, theological and political experiences brought forth renewed insight about that moment on the hillside as a moment where fear must have gripped the crowd. In such a setting, Jesus courageously refused the fear, refused the lack, and in one moment pointed to the possibility of turning over unjust political policy of the day towards the impoverished by reorganizing the people for the needs of the day. And the result?

There's more than enough.

The Chaplain of the Church Center for the United Nations helped the gifts and the theologies of participants come forward through worship at UNAW. "Liturgy" in Latin is defined as "the work of the people"; and it is hoped that in creating worship at UNAW we would encourage this unique work to happen from the gifts and understandings of those who gather in the Chapel. The magnitude of the issues confronted at United Nations Advocacy Week demands that work in theology, ritual, prayer and liturgy be strong enough to meet the challenge. It is a time to announce that God is strong enough and to expect that the human community will finally respond and reorganize itself for the sake of God's people and the earth.

### **Purpose of the Report**

The 2009 report is a description of what was said and done at UNAW and one of the instruments to be used in our local and global advocacy work. In this report you will find summaries of the presentations, mission visits and Regional Caucuses for quick reference. In addition, a comprehensive annex is provided at the end.

The Annex includes a detailed list of UNAW planning team and participants. Included within are the available original texts and Slideshow slides contributed by the presenters, the GPTR statement, the results of participant evaluation and all the materials and resources provided by the WCC. Since worship was an integral part of UNAW, sermons and prayers that reflect the diversity of the participant-led services are included. These materials can be used in local worship. Attribution is requested.

The Final Report, Annex, audio excerpts, and photos from UNAW 2009 can all be access at [unaw.oikoumene.org](http://unaw.oikoumene.org).

## ***II. Setting the Context for Ecumenical Advocacy***

Sunday  
15 November 2009

### **A. Sunday Preparations for UNAW: *UN 101, Introductions and Opening Worship***

---

**Ms. Jessica Hawkinson** (Presbyterian United Nations Office)  
**Ms. Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee** (WCC UN Liaison Office)

#### **UN 101 – Introductory Session, Sunday Afternoon**

---

“UN 101” was an optional session that provided an overview of the UN system for first-time participants. The session prepared delegates to engage in direct advocacy while generating an open discussion for how advocacy is done by churches at the United Nations. Ms. Jessica Hawkinson (Presbyterian UN Office) and Ms. Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee (WCC UN Liaison Office) began the session with a basic introduction to the United Nations system. They highlighted a brief history of the UN and its membership, followed by basic points about its charter and mission. The majority of the presentation consisted of explanations of the four principle organs of the United Nations, namely the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, and the Economic and Social Council. The session closed with an introduction to some of the voting blocks governments work within when making decisions at the United Nations.

This introductory session was followed by a presentation from Ms. Mia Adjali highlighting an example of faith based advocacy at the United Nations.

**Ms. Mia Adjali**  
Representative to the United Nations  
World Federation of United and Uniting Church Women

---

**Ms. Mia Adjali**, an ecumenical leader and advocate who has sought to advance the concerns of women and those in the margins, spoke of her experience of faith based advocacy at the UN. The Women’s Division of the United Methodist Church in fact had built the Church Center for the UN through the collection of funds from Methodist women around the United States. Methodist Women had a vision to provide a space for the voice and work of the churches at the UN.

The CCUN has been a space to advance the rights of women situations of armed conflict. Through continued advocacy, in 2000 the UN passed resolution 1325<sup>2</sup> that highlighted the concern of violence against women and asked for participation of women in creating solutions. Violence against women in Guinea was horrendous. In response, women wrote to the UN Security Council asking them to act. The next resolution of the UN was Security Council resolution 1820 prohibiting sex and rape to be used as

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/1325.html#Full>



weapons of war.<sup>3</sup> The denigration of people by raping women has historically been used as a weapon of war. UN Security Council Resolutions 1888<sup>4</sup> and 1889<sup>5</sup> were follow up resolutions advocating for eliminating violence against women. These resolutions were passed when the United States held the Presidency of the UN, and the sessions that passed the resolutions were chaired by Hillary Clinton.

Women in the CCUN have been pushing for adopting resolutions. Sarah Taylor, Director for Women, Peace and Security is currently in Norway where participants from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Nepal and Colombia are actively discussing strategies to achieve the implementation of all resolutions regarding women, peace and security. It is the first time in the history of the UN that these organizations of predominantly women are in discussion with the Security Council. Advocacy is not necessarily one group, but may be a group getting together as in this case to eradicate violence against women.

### Sunday Opening Worship:

*[A note from the Chaplain's journal]*

*The UNAW Opening Worship service sought to articulate and unify our reasons for gathering together this year's UNAW. The joy in gathering such a community was present along with the inherent insecurities in forming a new community. It was hoped that the diverse representation of UNAW and the deep concerns of each participant would help us learn in sharing one another's burdens more fully.*

*Through the use of rocks, bread bags and local prayers brought by UNAW participants from their communities around the world, the group reflected on Mark's account of the Loaves and Fishes (Mark 6:30-44). The Sharing of the Loaves and Fishes was used throughout the Week's service, with the passage being contextualized from the theme of the day. The worship concluded with the gathering of the peoples and sharing of bread; the group raised prayers that all would be fed.*



Tillman Chapel "sharing of bread"

Photo: M. Beach

<sup>3</sup> <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/391/44/PDF/N0839144.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/534/46/PDF/N0953446.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/542/55/PDF/N0954255.pdf>

## **B. Opening Remarks and Introduction to UNAW-GPTR 2009**

---

**Rev. Christopher Ferguson**  
Representative to the United Nations  
World Council of Churches

---

**Rev. Christopher Ferguson** introduced the program of UNAW by outlining the “what,” “why” and how for the week: “UNAW is in its fifth year of critically engaging with the theological and political discernment at the UN. It convenes and facilitates the global objective of the “oikoumene” advocating – not on behalf of but together – with the community of churches and specialized ministries through a common shared task.”

“The goal of UNAW is to gather global partners in a forum dedicated to strategic advocacy. UNAW enhances relationships with ecumenical partners, regional groups and regional partners by forming a web of advocacy relationships. This requires regional representation and the full participation of women and youth. While the 2009 UNAW delegation is diverse, it is neither broad enough nor representative of all groups. Another goal is to strengthen partnership with the UN system. Where opportunities exist at the UN, theological and ethical insights can be deepened. UNAW is unique in the UN context in NY in that it begins, continues and ends with ecumenical identity, spirituality and theological reflection on what we do,” said Mr. Ferguson.

The themes selected for UNAW 2009 reflect the ecumenical commitment to address issues and situations of injustice in the context of the United Nations in New York. The convening of three gatherings of world leaders in one week addressing three distinct crises is an example that the UN in New York has become the global “public square.”

Mr. Ferguson highlighted that each of the three UNAW issues represented a dimension of the work of Ecumenical Advocacy. The priority of Indigenous Peoples Rights acknowledges achievement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), but he added that it means little without implementation by states. Churches are themselves often unaware of the systemic injustices faced by the world’s indigenous peoples, and UNAW 2009 was challenged to work for adoption and implementation of the UNDRIP in both church and UN member states.

The situation in Colombia signifies a failure of the international community, especially that of the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, in addressing the injustices and sufferings of the people of Colombia. Churches have continued their witness and prophetic tasks in accompanying the displaced, refugees, indigenous, people of Afro-descent, and victims of repression. The Week stressed the need for a humanitarian and political solution and action taken by the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Building on last year’s UNAW theme of Climate Change, UNAW 2009 would focus specifically on the people affected by climate change, highlighting the lack of international instruments that guarantee their rights. Featuring the voices of churches from the pacific islands, UNAW would reflect, mobilize and most importantly actively engage UN member states’ influence on policy decision and the creation of



international instruments to ensure the rights of climate displaced peoples. This focus is but one aspect of the ecumenical communities eco-justice activities lead up to COP 15 and beyond.

Each year, the hope has been for regional participants to take home the agenda and also communicate with other members and build networks on the issues. Unfortunately, this goal is the least successfully completed by UNAW in the last five years. We need to find new ways this year for UNAW participants to join ongoing advocacy networks.

Mr. Ferguson highlighted the triangle in which all UNAW activities fall: Global Ecumenical, United Nations, and Advocacy. *Global Ecumenical* defines who we are as churches working from an ecumenical commitment united in action and purpose. *Advocacy* at UNAW is about making a difference by amplifying the voices of the poor and marginalized. It is not speaking for but walking with the oppressed and suffering peoples. This includes public witness, solidarity and accompaniment. *UN in NY*: while the ecumenical community is involved in advocacy on many fronts, UNAW provides a specific strategic focus on the UN in New York. The UN is the only forum for accountability among the 192 nations of the world.

Each day, Mr. Ferguson noted, would begin with worship that interweaves theological perspective into the focus area. UNAW would only be as successful as participants are successful in their own context. “No decisions are made at the UN; instead, we are advocates for decisions to be made in our national capitals. We engage in advocacy by holding member states to account, by speaking truth to power.”

Mr. Ferguson quoted Fr. Miguel d’Escoto who said “Things could hardly be worse” – the food crises, energy consumption, financial crisis, climate disaster, and vast majority of the world’s people are suffering so a select few could get benefit. The core of the issue is that the world and life given by God is menaced everyday. Citing Isaiah 59 where justice is cast aside and truth stumbles, he stressed, “When God saw injustice He was displeased, but the next verse says that when he saw that no one intervened, He was appalled.” It is the churches responsibility, said Mr. Ferguson, to assure that the God of life is not appalled.

**Rev. Kathleen Stone**

Chaplain for the Church Center at the United Nations  
United Methodist Church, GBGM – Women’s Division

---

## **Worship at UNAW**

“The chapel is your chapel” said Rev. Kathleen Stone, built by the Methodists and financed by United Methodist Women.

It’s a jurisdiction which hosts people from all over the world and addresses the most intractable issues. You are not alone. It is a place as much of calm as of anger and frustration. The chapel is a good place for all your issues. We also work for the three dimensions, ecumenical, UN and advocacy, bringing our hearts into one place.

She thanked all the participants who sent music and prayer. Unfortunately, not every selection could be included due to the limitation of time. Everyday, however, participants would have the opportunity to bring their prayers forward. The first three days worship gatherings would focus on one of the thematic priorities. Thursday would be led in the Orthodox tradition with a challenge for the day’s advocacy work at the UN. Friday would be a time to send forth delegates home and to bless the GPTR delegation’s continued work of UNAW through theological reflection.

---

**Rev. Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala**  
Programme Executive and GPTR Coordinator  
World Council of Churches

---

**Rev. Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala** discussed the partnership between UNAW and the World Council of Churches Global Platform for Theological Reflection (GPTR). GPTR has taken global ecumenical advocacy as its theme for critical theological engagement. Following UNAW, 20 UNAW participants would move to Long Island to provide a theological statement on advocacy. The process for engagement begins here at UNAW. GPTR was launched to bring the various WCC bodies together to reflect on critical issues. UNAW 2007 talked about migration and its impact, following a 2008 focus on the use and misuses of the Bible. Attention had also been given to the issues of Christianity and AIDS. This year takes the three themes of UNAW 2009 – climate displaced peoples, indigenous peoples' rights and Colombia – as fodder to reflect on ecumenical advocacy. Delegates come with deep Christian commitment, but many Christians do not understand the rationale for specific Christian involvement in global affairs and lack perspective. Some people see these issues as affecting only others. There are thus two purposes to GPTR: to reflect on what the issues and efforts mean to churches, and to develop a theological document to answer why churches are involved in ecumenical advocacy.

---

### **Logistics**

---

**Ms. Elizabeth Lee and Rev. Chris Ferguson** provided logistical coordination for the week. Simultaneous interpretation would be provided in Spanish and French with the support of our interpreters Don Reasoner and Laurette Nszane, respectively. With the meeting's commitment to ecological justice, there would be minimum use of paper, and documents would be provided primarily in electronic form. The WCC Director of Communications Mr. Mark Beach would be working to produce press statements and record UNAW meetings with photo and audio recordings. The speakers also noted the importance of the many volunteers, who would be joining UNAW by providing hospitality and support. Many volunteers took days off from work to provide hospitality, and the speakers emphasized the importance of volunteers' efforts not go unnoticed and unappreciated.

## C. Keynote Addresses: Charge and Challenge to the Churches

---

**Goal:** The UNAW 2009 opening keynote addresses sought to provide two perspectives: a voice from the churches and a voice from the United Nations. Both speakers provided a charge and challenge to UNAW in how churches should relate to the UN.

### ***Moderator***

#### **Dean Anders Gadaager**

Moderator, Finance Committee of the Central Committee of the WCC  
Dean, Cathedral of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church

---

### ***...A Charge and Challenge from the UN***



#### **Mr. Olav Kjørven**

Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations  
Director of Bureau for Development Policy at the UN Development  
Programme (UNDP)

---

**Mr. Kjørven** introduced himself “de facto” UN Ambassador to religions. He visited the Daoists in China, Sikhs in New Delhi, and Muslims in Turkey where concrete action plans to fight climate change were drafted by faith communities. Two weeks ago at Windsor Castle<sup>6</sup> the world’s faiths, representing around four billion people, came together with actions and commitments to counter climate change.

The UN has existed for about 60 years, which he recognized does not compare to the duration of many religions that have existed for centuries and over millennia. Religious communities are resilient and are likely to exist even after secular institutions such as the UN are no longer in place.

The UN seeks to promote peace between nations, human dignity and human rights, including economic opportunities of people all over the world. UN Development Programme is dedicated to this and to human development, fighting poverty, albeit imperfectly, with programs and offices in 166 countries around the world. UNDP is the custodian of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs represent the global compact, or rallying cry for action, to significantly reduce world poverty and destitution, and to increase communities for people between 2000 and 2015. UNDP has increased its support in helping countries, peoples and communities facing the climate change challenge.

Tremendous changes are occurring around the world such as the approach of dangerous levels of carbon emissions and concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. If left unchecked, the chance to stop

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.windsor2009.org/index.htm>

a cascading series of consequences would be lost. It is not enough to speak about climate change, but rather climate disruption, which serves as a more appropriate term for the impending disaster unless political leaders and governments unify to address these issues. It is possible that as a global community we have yet to endure such a complex global shift like the climate challenge. The complexities of changing the structurally engrained ways in which we live, work, produce, consume and move, away from high carbon to low carbon emissions is an enormous challenge. There is a world-wide vested interest ranging from individual countries and group perspectives that must be confronted.

He noted the urgency for a deal to be sealed in Copenhagen, but wondered if in fact the international community would have the courage to respond. Recently, the leaders of the world said a legally binding agreement would not be reached, and the remaining hope is now to organize a politically binding agreement in the year 2010. Materializing this hope will depend on the courage and commitment of countries and world leaders that have yet to be displayed.

“So why are we at the UN ‘wasting our time’ on the religions and on faiths? Why did I go with the UN Secretary General to Windsor Castle to celebrate faith commitments with royalty and with clergy in fancy robes?” he asked.

Mr. Kjørven highlighted several reasons:

First, UN officers and affiliates have endeavored to harness the causes and effects of climate change but to no avail. The emission curve continues to climb at a steeper rate in spite of previous efforts.

Second, faith traditions have a reach and role in society that is unmatched today by other stakeholders, institutions, and groups. Around 80-85 percent of the population regularly tune into what the voices of faith have to say about issues, be they spiritual or moral.

Third, religious institutions have an enormous economic clout that is rarely realized. Religious institutions own eight percent of all land on the planet, much of which is forested land with tremendous biological diversity. Actions that church institutions take with land, forests and natural resources matter tremendously in the fight against climate change. In the financial markets, religious institutions represent the third largest actors in investments, pension funds and other accounts. When churches decide that high carbon is a sin and initiate a shift from high to low carbon investment portfolios, it would send shock waves through the financial system and expedite the transition to renewable energy programs, low carbon solutions, and greener technologies

Fourth, a broad mobilization for change is in order. The American environmentalist James Gustave Speth, founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council and the World Resources Institute, was the head of UNDP for several years in the 1990s. Speth had initially believed that the environmental crisis was caused by environmentally irresponsible policy decisions and actions, and that right policies could fight climate change and reverse environmental degradation. Speth later realized that the environmental crisis was really about apathy, greed and selfishness. There are no other institutions better placed to help counter apathy, greed and selfishness than the faith communities.

Mr. Kjørven declared the significance of targeting the values and habits of people with a stronger moral voice, which emphasizes that groups most susceptible to climate changes will be the ones that have least caused these changes. The fight against climate change will require long-term changes that require intergeneration considerations, and it would be irresponsible to make decisions with a shortsighted vision of

---

the future. The duration of church institutions places them in an ideal position to innovate this inter-generational lens.

At Windsor Castle, he was impressed by the new 30-40 commitments made by religions in addition to the existing 30-40 pre-existing commitments. It was also an opportunity for differing groups to realize they share common goals. Secular environmental representatives and American evangelical churches like the Vineyard Evangelical Church in America realized they had at least three things in common that could help them work together: they shared an apocalyptic vision of the future, were driven by missionary zeal, and had the same enemies of apathy, greed and selfishness.

Since his role as the de facto UN Ambassador to religions he stressed,

If we really are to make progress that we desperately need in the coming years, we will need a broad mobilization and I personally don't think it will happen unless you, the World Council of Churches, and all the churches you represent, as well as the religions more broadly speaking, are part of this effort.

When he was 10 years old, Mr. Kjørven went with his grandfather, a farmer, to check the status of a herd of young cattle in the farm. As they walked, his grandfather explained what a farmer must do to get a good crop. His grandfather also explained how getting something out of the land and animals depended on how well he took care of the streams, forest and wildlife. His grandfather said, "Running a forest is about taking care of all of God's creation and it's about thanking God for all that's provided free of charge."

Mr. Kjoen's grandfather gave him a gift for life, "the gift of seeing my own life as connected with the natural world and with faith and worship, and that it is all one and the same." Religions have a fundamental role in motivating people. Whether it is climate change negotiations or other issues that must be confronted, he exhorted that thinking about those issues and their motivations would be helpful. He wished that those negotiating in Copenhagen would stop and think for a second – "where did my motivation come from and what am I trying to do here?"

At Windsor Castle, the UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon clearly stated the important role of faiths in combating climate change. Mr. Ban Ki-moon affirms Al Gore's exhortation to "make peace with the planet." The UN was established to make peace among nations, and at the precipice of an environmental crisis, negotiations seem to be focused on targets of parts per million, percentages, cuts and dollar figures and transferring of funds from the North to South. While these are crucial considerations, the underlying issue is about making peace with the planet. It is about humanity acknowledging the fact that we must bear the consequences of our 100-year assault on nature. Rules, habits and incentives help in creating a peace deal with the planet. We must stop destroying God's gifts and creation. For this to happen, the UN should broaden its perspective and seek partnerships with the religious community. "We won't be able to make that case among ourselves in the intergovernmental arenas and to all people if you don't speak that language. You have the most powerful vocabulary, the most powerful language to make that case, whether it is in the Christian or Daoist [tradition]." The effort to combat climate change will not succeed without the UN's partnership with religions, concluded Mr. Kjørven.

## ***...A Charge and Challenge from within the Churches***

### **Ms. Lois Dauway**

Moderator, Program Committee, Central Committee of the World Council of Churches  
Interim Deputy General Secretary, General Board of General Ministries, United Methodist Church

---

**Ms. Dauway** evoked Nike's slogan to urge UNAW delegates to join her in a new "just do it" school of theology. She challenged UNAW to be driven by activism and concrete outcomes rather than just words. Ms. Dauway firmly stated her perpetual impatience with institutional systems that have a mission to care for human needs, but instead engage in exploitation. The United States healthcare system has been driven by the "greed and apparent ruthlessness of the medical establishment of pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies and professional associations." Although there are attempts to challenge the healthcare system, it continues to run on a "lucrative and dysfunctional" cycle that is need of reform.



Above all, what is most disheartening is the lack of movement and response from the churches. This raises the first question in regard to the complacency of churches to such displays of injustice. John 3:17 states, "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuse to help?" Let us hope most would agree with the next verse in John 3:18: "let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action."

On an international front, the United Nations, an agency with a rich history, is also in need of reform. The UN has failed to reach its ambitious objectives "to ending war, alleviation of poverty, and the attainment of human rights and dignity for the world's population." The focus of mobilization and change is translated through documents rooted in the UN language which is many times foreign to those whom these resolutions and decisions impact. The arrangement of the UN system itself can be an obstacle comprised of "diplomatic maneuverings, and bureaucratic structures."

She stated, "the churches ... already have the theological wherewithal to dismantle global injustice. We simply do not have the will. We are good with words in the church, we are good with documents. Let me be clear, I do not have problems with either words or documents; however, I am seeking more action on the part of churches and religious organizations."

The crucial component to effective advocacy is to "Just Do it." She shared, "My hope and prayer is that the Nike School of Theology will provide the response to some of the global issues that need to be addressed. JUST DO IT! And let me be clear, although the United Nations is a secular organization, I would admonish it to at least enroll in some classes!"

The churches must utilize what they hold at their fingertips: "power and influence, access, extensive resources, congregants and mission personnel located around the world."



An important first-step would be to engage in active listening to those “impacted by exploitation and war.” This is modeled in at least two biblical passages.

Jeremiah 8:11 states, “They have treated the wound of my people carelessly. Saying peace, peace when there is no peace.” This passage should remind churches that the excuse of “been there, done that” and the emphasis on eloquent resolutions and sermons of peace and justice” are insufficient. On the one hand the misconception that exhaustive efforts have been made against “perpetrators of violence and oppression” should be re-examined.

Job 12:2-3 says, “No doubt you are the people, and wisdom would die with you, but I have understood as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Who does not know such things as these?” The methodology of speaking on behalf of others must stop so that the process of transformation within the church can begin by listening to “those who hurt” and shifting to active engagement by advocating with those in need:

We in the churches, particularly those in positions of authority, need to learn to hear and heed what people are saying. We must listen to those who hurt, stand with them, sometimes lead, sometimes follow, but actively engage in those things that will help bring peace on earth. JUST DO IT!

Leading by example, UNAW and Global Platform for Theological Reflection (GPTR) delegates should take with them the insights, experiences and knowledge provided through UNAW and translate them into commitments of ACTION. “Will we err and compromise be the order of the day?” Can the nations in the Pacific no longer be known as the fluid continent? Is it possible to make Indigenous Peoples Rights a reality? An action plan approach, coupled with theological reflection, is a highly anticipated conclusion of GPTR. Ms. Dauway ended with the hope of this vision:

That there will finally be enough space, listening space, learning space, the promise that “no more would the sound of weeping be heard” justice would roll, there would be equitable distribution of resources, power dynamics should shift, histories be recognized and respected, and when confronted by injustice, we would not just talk about what should be done...we would JUST DO IT!

---

## Interactive Discussion

### Round I

A **participant from the United Kingdom** appreciated the importance of the faiths, and is shocked to believe that passages like 2 Peter 3 is understood to hasten the day when the earth would burn and that it was hence the Christian duty to work against the environment. She asked how we are to engage with such groups.

**Mr. Kjørven** noted that religions could only participate in Windsor Castle if they demonstrated commitment to fighting climate change. The different groups attended because they had mobilized and had an action plan from their own history and situation. Windsor Castle was not an attempt to define what the religions are about, but to highlight the distinctiveness of each faith’s influence on the plans that came forward. With regard to the second question, one can find quotes to justify anything in Scripture. Movements have demonized each other. For example conservative Christians and Judea Christians in attendance led to a



situation in which one could not understand how an ecological movement could not have respect for unborn life. As they engaged in dialogue they came to agreement that each side should ask for forgiveness and try to heal the deep rifts and pains. It is not that the commitments have not been said, but the mobilization coming from those commitments has not been realized. Several years ago action was taken on cigarette smoking. What can be done to mobilize, empower and engage people? How can political leaders promote agendas and go back to their constituencies if they do not agree? A role must be filled in pushing this agenda forward by placing pressure on and raising awareness towards these officials.

## Round II

**A participant from Canada** noted that the government of Canada was the first to say that nothing would come from Copenhagen and that nothing could be agreed to. What can be done to find ways for political leaders to respond?

**A participant from Fiji** expressed her shock and dismay that there would be “no deal.” Some islands have already been uninhabitable, with the loss of arable land to plant. The affected people who live close to the sea have not produced the carbon footprint for which they are paying the consequences. “I will not go back to my country with a “no deal.”

**A participant India** appreciated that the UN has plans, but asked if the perspectives of the values and culture of the people at the “bottom” have been taken into consideration. How has this aspect been taken into account while planning for the rest of the world?

**Mr. Kjørven** recognized that these are difficult questions, while the concerns cannot be deflected by stating that UN is just the buttress, it should be noted that it is not the UN who concluded that the deal is not possible. The real actors are the Governments, however, it was pointed out that there is something missing.

The UN must continue to do their part; the Secretary-General has this commitment. Even if a deal is not produced, there is still much at stake during Copenhagen. For example, political agreements can be produced that frame boundaries along certain principles, and a framework agreement on the method in which complex issues can get settled. The timetable beyond Copenhagen is to get this binding agreement for island countries and the Pacific, whether it will be middle or end of next year.

It's important that the voice of faiths be heard, and that political leaders hear this voice. It will be difficult to get the necessary base for politicians to be courageous and step forward, yet Mr. Kjørven was in agreement with Canada that now is the time to mobilize, and there is no reason to give up hope.

## Round III

**A participant from Palestine** acknowledged that the problems presented are very well known; his question was about what the aggregate value of dealing with these problems would be. The churches have 80 percent of population, yet the Churches are not aware of their own power given by God. His concern had to do with the silence of churches; he urged them to pressure governments to change policies dealing with the environment.

**A participant from the Democratic Republic of Congo** intervened on the role that multinationals play in Climate Change. For example 125 million acres of forest and diversity in the Democratic Republic of Congo have been occupied by corporations. For international companies that are exploiting forestry and diversity,

---

the demand should be set fourth for transparency of the signature agreement. Too much has left the Democratic Republic of Congo as a result of these multinationals. This is reason enough to push a coalition together to bring light to such practices.

**A participant from Colombia** noted that many sectors of the World Social Forum, a working group alternative to the UN, imply that another world is possible, and that “the world is waiting.” Colombia would like to be a priority because of the 30,000 human rights violations. It has been too easy to say each year that the propositions of the UN in regard to such acts are merely “recommendations”. The oppressed need a new UN, one that takes more action.

**A participant from India** inquired if the UN is capable of influencing multinational corporations.

**Mr. Kjørven** implied that conferences around the world may have lost the awareness of the enormous power that they have. If organizations and individuals tapped into their asset base, change would come about.

In response to the question, do we need a different UN? YES. It was constructed 60 years ago and has done a lot but is in need of reform. The time has come to open up a discourse about the broader global challenges we are facing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Constructing this new agenda and new mission would not be easy. The UN acted as the arena for nation states which would not change, but would need to change the role of churches, faith, and Indigenous People. Eloquence in the past was put on paper. For example, Eleanor Roosevelt displayed the power of ideas. That would be just what is required now, the articulation process of new solutions to new and old issues.

The United Nations has been in close dialogue with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which has led to much corporation and collaboration. Governments have been a different story where tensions have caused them to remove themselves from the UN base by taking collective action away from the UN forums. The shifting of collective action away plays with the values that keep nations civilized and accountable. It would be important to strengthen the UN as the global institution of choice so that very important things would not disappear.

**Ms. Dauway**, who has been a community organizer, viewed 30 days to Copenhagen as a definite target and an opportunity; people should not be dismayed but encouraged by such efforts.

#### **Round IV**

**A participant** made a challenge to establishing a more professional relationship with the media. For instance, during an event four of his colleagues were inside doing work, while OXFAM was outside displaying a boiling pot and the media took a picture. These forms of raising awareness are useful through various outlets of media. In moving forward steps have been taken to invite bishops to come to Copenhagen and media blitz should be set up for all the bishops.

**A participant from Australia** affirmed that there are many species other than human beings that are God’s creation too. In Australia many animals are endangered by human settlement. Is it possible to somehow broaden the Church’s mission to include other species? Does that lead to being advocates for some other option, rather than just the human population on this earth? What can be done as a Christian group engaged in this conversation?

---

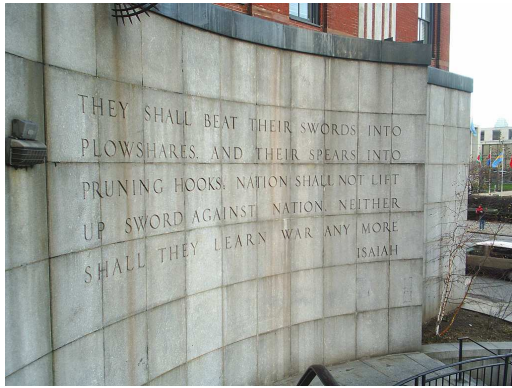
**Mr. Kjørven** stated that it was Windsor who was all about the care for creation, something that all faiths have in common across the spectrum. It was exciting to see that when faiths reflect on their own beliefs, they find a common denominator in taking care of Gods creation. Yet this has not been considered the core mission of the church, which must change. A commitment must be made by the church and the Islamic community on how to deal with the rest of life on this planet. A focus on restructuring food production, organizing the economy, the issue of climate change, biological diversity, and technology are all aspects that can reduce negative pressures on the planet for the creation of peace with other life forms.

**Dean Anders Gadaager** graciously thanked all those that participated and regarded the session as a great initiator the “sleeves have been pulled up.”

### III. Ecumenical Advocacy Priorities

#### Monday Morning Worship: Climate Displaced Peoples

---



Isaiah Wall

Photo: M. Beach

*[A note from the Chaplain's journal]*

*The prayer began at the Isaiah wall, ½ a block down the street from the Tillman Chapel at the CCUN, outdoors in the small Ralph Bunche Park. Engraved in the wall is the Isaiah passage of Isaiah 2:4. There was no paper in anyone's hands and leaders' voices were muffled by loud street sounds. The group partook in a liturgical response "God, of all creation: when pruning hooks are turned into spears, plowshares into swords? Land and livelihood, gone . . . bread and fish a distant dream.*

Monday  
16 November 2009

#### Thematic Priority I: *Climate Displaced Peoples*

---

**Session Organizers:** Mr. Dennis Frado (Lutheran Office for World Community), Dr. Guillermo Kerber (WCC), Ms. Elizabeth C. H. Lee (WCC), Ms. Faautu Talapusi (WCC) in consultation with the Pacific Council of Churches.

**Co-Sponsorship:** the Permanent Mission of Grenada to the United Nations.

**Location:** Conference Room 4 of the UN, with invitation to the UN diplomatic, staff and NGO communities.

While the general issue of climate change is being discussed within the United Nations (UN) system, some aspects of the problem have not been adequately addressed. As a follow-up to last year's theme on Climate Change, United Nations Advocacy Week (UNAW) 2009 focused on Climate Displaced Peoples; specifically exploring some of the political, social and economic effects of climate change on vulnerable communities. Some of these communities have been forced to consider displacement as a response. At the same time the sessions for 2009 look and advocated for means in which the UN system can better address this situation.



H.E. Beck and the UNAW Pacific delegation

Photo: M. Beach

The sessions sought to examine some of the following questions. Which parts of the UN system have given this topic attention? How is the phenomenon of climate displaced peoples (including internal displacement, displacement across borders, resettlement of populations like those in Tuvalu, Kiribati or the Maldives) being addressed? What are the implications for a community's cultural identity when forced to leave their homes due to climate change? How are their human rights affected? What is the impact on their

sovereignty? What moral and ethical responsibility should the international community assume? How are the churches responding? How should they respond?

**The work consisted of *three modules*:**

1. High Level Panels and Discussions on CDPs at the United Nations cosponsored by the Permanent Mission of Grenada
  - Climate displaced peoples in the UN System and current negotiation
  - Churches and religious responses to climate displaced peoples
2. Missions Advocacy: Preparatory Work
3. Advocacy at the Missions and Reporting

## **CDPs Session I: Climate displaced peoples in the UN System and Current Negotiations**

**Goal:** This session sought to provide an overall perspective of the activities and international negotiations engaged by states, the UN and related agencies in relation to climate displaced people and COP 15.

***Moderator***

**Mr. Dennis Frado**

Director, Lutheran Office for World Community

---

**H. E. Mr. Collin Beck**

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Solomon Islands to the UN  
Vice-Chair of the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS)

---



**Ambassador Beck** welcomed UNAW participants to the UN, and extended particular greetings to Pacific participants and churches. He stressed the relevance of churches' work due to their closeness to the communities and grassroots groups. Furthermore, churches and the UN share the same vision: working for peace at all levels.

As the Vice-Chair of AOSIS, he came to speak on behalf of the 43 states members of AOSIS, and extended special greetings from the Chair, Ambassador Williams from Grenada, who was unable to come because of a pre-COP meeting in Copenhagen.

When examining climate change and displacement, he recognized the preoccupation and work of the churches for the most vulnerable communities. Environmental and climate change issues are quite relevant to small developing islands. Among them, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are especially ill equipped to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Climate change is an issue pertinent to all of us. It touches on food security, king tides, droughts, floods, health and security.

The reality of climate displaced peoples' suffering is undeniable. There are environmental refugees migrating within countries like Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, where communities have had to be moved to more elevated islands. They have been forced to leave their ancestral lands and change their cultures and lifestyles - for instance from farming food to obtaining imported food. There have been significant health challenges with such dietary changes and diabetes has become the leading killer in the Pacific.

Some members of AOSIS do not have the alternative of migrating to more elevated grounds within their own borders and are particularly vulnerable to climate displacement outside of their territories. Countries like Tuvalu and the Maldives are no more than 3 meters above sea level, and waves are washing over their land. Climate migration is also a reality in Africa, mainly due to the extremes of floods and droughts. Displacement shows the human face of climate change and raises critical sustainable development challenges.

With regards to international political action, a UN resolution presented at the Human Rights Council by the government of the Maldives recognizes this human face of climate change.<sup>7</sup> This has security implications when a group or a community is uprooted. The Solomon Islands, where there are 80 different languages in a population of half a million, many challenges are raised when even one of these groups are uprooted.

The UN often does not address the needs of countries with small populations, and UN mechanisms fail to adequately address the situations of these small countries. AOSIS has sought to keep these gaps on the radar of the UN. While the crisis of climate displacement has been raised by different international frameworks and declaration (e.g. the Barbados Program of Action and Brussels Declaration<sup>8</sup>), they have not received the attention deserved. The goals remain unattained and the UN has yet to tackle the crisis around environmental refugees. Policies are urgently needed to address this issue of climate displacement.

Regarding the present climate change negotiations, AOSIS requests a legally binding agreement as an outcome of COP 15 in Copenhagen. If there is a postponement of such a legally binding instrument, COP 15 must show a clear political will to achieve it in the near future. Unfortunately, this political will is missing in current negotiations. Faith is not only about inward looking, but looking at ones neighbor and assisting in any way possible. AOSIS is concerned with the low collective expectations for a legal instrument.

There are, indeed, enough resources to respond to the climate change crisis. In response to the recent financial crisis, governments immediately made trillions of dollars available. AOSIS is requesting that 1 percent of global GDP of \$500 billion be allocated to address adaptation due to climate change. There is a need for true leadership, not to "wait and see." Given the political reality, AOSIS noted its concern that the world should lower its collective expectations and create legal forms to deal with climate change post Copenhagen.

---

<sup>7</sup> The Human Rights Council passed the "Human Rights and Climate Change" resolution on 26 March 2008: A/HRC/7/L.21/Rev.1 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G08/121/52/PDF/G0812152.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>8</sup> Brussels Declaration of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries Brussels, Belgium, 14-20 May 2001 <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan014525.pdf>



Effective technology is required to respond to the current challenges that shift from fossil fuel based technologies to renewable energy based technologies. To adequately respond to climate change and global warming, average global temperature should not increase more than 1.5°C with regards to pre-industrial levels.

A peak in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should be expected by 2015 but then a strong decrease should take place with industrialized countries decreasing their emissions 45 percent by 2020 (compared with 1990 levels) and 95 percent by 2050. This should not go beyond 350 ppm of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. Technology is essential so developing states can carry out mitigation programs.

These are ambitious targets, but climate change negotiations are not sufficiently ambitious and below Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) range. Actions such as paying a climate debt should be assumed by industrialized countries responsible for their contributions to global climate change over time.

As negotiations advance (or fail), land continues to be degraded, water shortages occur, food insecurities are on the rise and hunger spreads. The victims of climate change are the most vulnerable, and what is to ensure that Copenhagen must bring forth something to stabilize the atmosphere.

**Mr. Jakob Strom**

Counsellor, Swedish Mission to the UN  
Representative of the European Union

**Mr. Strom** spoke on behalf of Sweden and the 27 members of the European Union (EU).<sup>9</sup> He welcomed the opportunity to speak with ecumenical leaders on the topic of climate change, especially as his church in NY has a program in Louisiana for Katrina victims. He cited Hurricane Katrina as an example that highlights climate change and its universal effects.

All countries will experience the consequences of climate change. While it is true that the poor in developing countries are more vulnerable and more affected, it is nonetheless a global problem.

In Sweden, the melting of sea ice, coastal erosion and melting permafrost in the Arctic are already causing severe consequences. Entire communities have had to be relocated. The government and indigenous peoples involved have built cooperative programs to generate a sense of political stability. However, the problem is about the planet and we must attack it together.

In the global picture, Africa is and will continue to be the worst affected as a region. One third of Africa is plagued by drought, and this will affect the lives of two million by 2020 and 200 million more by 2050. Mr. Strom emphasized the imperative to ensure security and sustainable development.



Mr. Strom

Photo: M. Beach

<sup>9</sup> Sweden held the EU presidency from July to December 2009.



As requested by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General produced a report in September 2009 on "Climate Change and its Possible Security Implications."<sup>10</sup> For Mr. Strom, this is a watershed report that opens a new field of work for the UN. It incorporates many areas where the UN is already active, including related fields with refugees (UNHCR), migrants (IOM), UN peace keeping operations, conflict prevention and adaptation. He indicated that new ways of responding to this global challenge should also be sought.

The term "environmental refugees" is a difficult and contested term, as it carries the risk of undermining the status of these individuals. The UN should become a positive force instead of undermining or exacerbating the effects of climate change. Climate change calls for a preventive climate security policy, with division of responsibility, access to resources, and other specifications clarified. Work, he mentioned, must be continued in the General Assembly.

The building of emergency preparedness for the medium and longer term climate change hazards should be part of the UN's mission and key in responding to climate change. These mechanisms would increase the resilience of communities and countries to better respond to climate changes.

Regarding the current climate change negotiations, he expressed the EU concern about the pace of the negotiations. There is a real risk of not having a legally binding outcome at COP 15, but the EU is not giving up. Bilateral conversations between the Swedish Prime Minister and President Obama demonstrate a willingness to move forward. He agreed with President Obama's note that efforts should be reinforced, not lowered, and demands be made to other developed countries, like Canada and Australia. These demands should be aimed at adopting ambitious prescriptions to frame international cooperation and agreement.

The EU, currently responsible for 20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), has already committed itself to reduce emissions 20 percent by 2020 (plus 10 percent more if others agree) and 80 – 95 percent by 2050. However, the US needs to be on board for a binding agreement and it will not be possible to have a resolution passed by the US Congress before COP 15. Likewise, Canada and Australia need to be on board – both nations emit twice the amount of Europe. Due to their size, immediate and strong actions from large economies are necessary. Furthermore, major emerging developing countries like China and India should be part of the agreement.

While a 2015 global peak of emissions is desirable, the peak must be no later than 2020 and stay below 2°C. More than 2°C would lead to disaster and we urgently need quick action.

Positive signs are evident with commitments made by developing countries. Brazil has recently committed to reduce 15 percent of its emissions (compared to 2005) by 2020. Similar commitments are coming from China and India. Costa Rica and Maldives pledged to become carbon neutral states in 20 years time. The actions of developing countries need to be supported financially with approximately €100 billion (USD \$150 billion) per year by 2020.

The Copenhagen document needs to be signed in December 2009 and should include the following aspects: elements of a binding document, economy-wide quantified emission reductions, actions to be taken by developing countries, reporting and monitoring of those actions, compliance mechanisms built in, and flexible mechanisms that are most cost effective.

---

<sup>10</sup> Secretary-General Report on "Climate change and its possible security implications" as requested by the General Assembly. September 2009, A/64/350. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4ad5e6380.pdf>

If a legally binding document is not possible at COP 15, a solid political agreement should be reached. This agreement should consist of substantive building blocks for an instrument which should be legally binding, with quantified economic measures, actions by developing countries, quantifiable reporting and monitoring, and provision of compliance mechanisms.

COP 15 will not be the end, added Mr. Strom. Even if a successful deal is reached the implementation of the deal and further legislation will be essential.

Popular understanding of the negotiations and a strong demand for an ambitious change are of the utmost importance. In this, stressed Mr. Strom, churches could play a relevant role to have an ethical and more defensible future and a more equitable world.

## Interactive Dialogue

---

### Round I

**A participant from the Democratic Republic of Congo** highlighted the relationship between climate change and migration in Africa. If industrialized countries have a historical responsibility, why is the EU is closing its doors to African migrants? When will borders be reopened?

**A participant from Colombia** asked how are small states, who nevertheless have the same one vote as large states in the UN General Assembly, impacting the UN? How are these states shaping the lobbying of multinational companies?

**A participant from Canada** stressed his agreement with the need to decrease 95 percent of CO2 emissions by 2050 and the climate debt. Recognizing that Canada has done little to tackle climate change, he requested help globally by suggesting that the EU and AOSIS not vote for Canada as a member of the next Security Council unless they act on climate change.

### Responses

**Ambassador Beck** stated that although it is true that one country equals one vote, it is not so much about votes, but a real commitment to do something. He acknowledged the leadership of the EU in emphasizing some of these issues. He called for climate change education for the general population as part of education for all.

**Mr. Strom** said he was not in a position to respond to the question related to Europe migration policies as he is not following this issue.

### Round II

**A participant from Germany** asked for the specific reasons that have prevented the agreement of a legally binding instrument and why Mr. Strom was optimistic for the future.



---

## Response

**Mr. Strom** said that the USA has not been able to present a climate change bill to the US congress up to now. This could be envisaged only for next year. According to Mr. Strom, if we look at what countries are willing to offer, Japan, Indonesia, Brazil, among others mentioned are presenting ambitious proposals.

**A member of the NGO community** recognized the leadership role of WCC staff Rev. Chris Ferguson, and the chaplain of the Church Centre, Kathleen Stone, in drafting the Declaration of Religions for the September 22 UN Climate change Summit in New York.

**A participant from Bolivia** stressed the relationship between climate change and security with economy and poverty. Climate change should be seen in the context of the economic model. She called for the UN to listen to the messages coming from indigenous peoples on alternative models.

**Ambassador Beck's** closing remarks highlighted that AOSIS was looking for mechanisms that would work for everyone in relationship to climate change, poverty eradication and quality of life.

**Mr. Strom's** closing remarks stressed the urgency of looking for better uses of national resources, developing renewable energy and lowering costs through means such as wind and solar energy.

---

## CDPs Session II: Churches and religious responses to climate displaced peoples

**Goal:** This session focused on the challenges churches are living with in relation to climate change displacement. Speakers from the churches from the Pacific and Africa and the Bahá'í community presented to the UN community their challenges and faith-based responses to climate displaced peoples.

**Moderator**

**Ms. Kyriaki Avtzi**

Executive Secretary, Conference of European Churches

---



Mrs. Kioni

Photo: M. Beach

**Mrs. Mbari Kioni<sup>11</sup>**

Director, All Africa Council of Churches

---

**Mrs. Mbari Kioni** introduced the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) – a fellowship of 174 churches and 22 councils in 40 countries in Africa and presented the structure and programs of the AACC.

---

<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Kioni's PowerPoint presentation is available in the Annex.

Ecclesiastics 42:15-16 states, "The earth is mourning, pining away, the pick of earth's people are withering away. The earth is defiled by the feet of its inhabitants, for they have transgressed the laws, violated the decree, broken the everlasting covenant."

AACC had actively been involved in climate change debate under its program of Climate Change and Care for Creation. The primary focus has been to create awareness of the issues within its constituency of member churches. This has been achieved through consultations in Eastern and Southern Africa (June 2008), West Africa (June 2009), and Central Africa (September 2009). The objectives of these consultations were to develop a common framework for African Ecumenical Action on climate change; mobilize churches and help them understand and respond to climate change; create awareness on the causes, consequences and mitigation mechanisms for climate change among the churches; and increase appreciation of the role of church in advocacy for continental and international response to the issues of climate change.

For AACC to be a credible voice at the continental level and to assist members in awareness creation and capacity building for climate change adaptation and mitigation, it has joined hands with ecumenical actors (e.g. WCC, APRODEV and Caritas), civil society networks and resource organizations like the Pan-African Climate Justice Network (PACJA) hosted at AACC, and the Alliance for Religion and Conservation (ARC). The collaboration of these organizations has strengthened the link with civil society networks in Africa and has contributed to the influence of the African Agenda towards Copenhagen in December.

She presented four critical concerns for Africa on climate change:

(a) Agricultural sector: Heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture and changing climate patterns may result in African countries' agricultural productivity to be reduced by as much as 50 percent by 2020 and leave 75-250 million people exposed to extreme water stress.

(b) Health: Changes in rainfall patterns will affect the presence and absence of vector-borne and waterborne pathogens, increasing the categories of populations vulnerable to meningitis and malaria. There are already new strains of drug-resistant malaria in Africa.

(c) Migration and conflicts over natural resources: There are increased cases of conflicts linked to climate change, especially depletion of water resources and grazing land for nomadic communities. Climate induced migration of cattle and nomadic populations are also swiftly becoming a reality. In Burkina Faso and East Africa, residents of dry and rural areas are migrating to rural regions with greater rainfall.

(d) Employment: Reports show that labor markets will be negatively affected by erratic hydropower resources, diminishing fishery resources as well as problems related to pollution, waste disposal and water supply.

A worker tries to lift up a weak cow from among the carcasses of drought-stricken cows in a paddock at the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) factory near Athi River, 50km (31 miles) east of the capital Nairobi



Courtesy of Mrs. Mbari Kioni

## **The Nexus: Climate change and migration.**

Shifts in climate will bring different changes to different regions, some areas may see greater natural resources because of increased rainfall but overall, the poorest regions are most likely to suffer because they are least able to adjust to new conditions. A recently released IPCC report suggests farmers in warmer and drier conditions in the Sahelian region of Africa have already curtailed their cropping seasons. Also yields from rain-fed agriculture are expected to fall as much as 50 percent in some poor African countries.

## **Rural livelihoods and climate vulnerability.**

Environmental change has immediate and direct effects on the health and well-being of millions of households that depend on natural resources for their basic livelihoods. These changes are causing people to leave resource-dependent rural areas and create new migration patterns. Rural households tend to rely heavily on climate-sensitive resources such as, local water supplies, agricultural land, arable farming, livestock husbandry, natural resources such as fuel-wood and wild herbs. Climate change is reducing the availability of these local natural resources, limiting the options for rural households that depend on natural resources for consumption or trade.

Mrs. Kioni provided some examples of churches' response to climate migration. The Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) in conjunction with Church World Service, under its Relief and Emergency Services Programme, is engaging in mitigation, precaution and adaptation of environmentally friendly technology for human development; an awareness creation program for the members; and addressing effects of climate change like food security. Re-greening Africa has been taking place for decades: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya - tree planting since 1983; Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana – intends to plant 200,000 trees; Presbyterian Church in Cameroon has already planted one million trees since 1960s and intends to plant a further 100,000; and Northern Diocese of the Evangelical church in Tanzania intends to plant 8.5 million trees in an intensive tree planting campaign.

The Catholic Coalition of Climate Change (a partnership of 13 national Catholic organizations worldwide) is expanding the catholic education to incorporate teachings on climate change, environment and care of creation. This coalition also incorporates these components in training for priests, deacons and lay members.

ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together Alliance) has facilitated effective responses to climate displaced people in Mozambique through Ecumenical Committee for Social Development (CEDES) in humanitarian provisions; in Kenya, Norwegian Church Aid and four other ACT members are responding to the drought that caused thousands of pastoralists to migrate to new areas in search of pasture; in Madagascar, through the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), the churches responded to flood victims by providing humanitarian support.

The Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa (10 million followers in 53 countries) intends to work with secular and government groups to co-ordinate action on environmental refugees

## **Call for action from the international community.**

Mrs. Kioni emphasized that developed countries should avail funds through investment in irrigation, making farmers less dependent on rains and through education in agricultural practices that conserve the



environment. These endeavors will make poor communities and countries more resilient to climate change. Migrants from climate disasters will need new rights - those displaced by the chronic impacts of climate change will require permanent resettlement.

To reduce the vulnerability of Least Developed Countries to the effects of climate change their governments need support

- to develop policy coherence at national and international levels by mainstreaming environmental climate change considerations into migration management policies and practices;
- to boost humanitarian actions to minimize forced displacement and facilitate the role of migration as an adaptation strategy;
- to treat climate change as a security threat not necessarily in the traditional military sense;
- to practice good governance that prioritizes issues which are dear to human survival; and
- to use resources in a more beneficial and sustainable manner.

She called for policy actions to reduce climate-related migration, particularly in rural regions of less developed countries. Such policies would decrease the vulnerability on livelihood, ultimately reducing the need for families to migrate because of climate change.

Ethical dimensions to the link between climate change, poverty, and migration need to be considered.

African governments and churches must be enhanced and strengthened in their capacity in Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The church should strengthen cooperation with agencies with good capacity in Disaster Risk Reduction like the Red Cross. The growing number of disasters and conflicts linked to future climate change will increase the number of migrants unless urgent action is taken!

### **Mr. Peter Emberson**

Climate Change Campaigns Officer, the Pacific Conference of Churches

**Mr. Peter Emberson** acknowledged the indigenous peoples of the land on where the meeting took place, the indigenous elders and religious leaders in the room. His presentation was divided into three sections – the Moana Declaration, an example of climate displacement in Funafala, Tuvalu, and the Pacific Council of Churches (PCC) Climate Justice Campaign.

#### **The Moana Declaration**

The Moana Declaration, created in April 2009, is the most recent ecumenical policy position adopted by Pacific church leaders on climate change and resettlement. In April 2009, the PCC convened over 27 church leaders from the entire Pacific, along with church and development partners from around the world such as Bread for the World and the World Council of Churches. The meeting examined resettlement and climate change as they relate to ecumenism, human rights, eco-economics and governance. The declaration noted 12 calls around the churches role as church, religious bodies, and governors of their situation in the Pacific and beyond.





Mr. Emberson provided a slideshow account of the reality of the situation in Tuvalu that was gathered from a recent trip to Tuvalu the PCC took to assist Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu (EKT) with the formulation of a climate change position and introduce the “Moana Declaration.” Article 5 of the Moana Declaration states that the PCC should

Carry out intensive public consultations with Pacific communities affected and will be affected by rising sea levels or other consequences of climate change, with a view to developing viable and practical plans to protect the rights of forced climate migrants, in particular their housing, land and property and related rights.

This meeting revealed how climate change and resettlement are already apparent and a challenge.

## Tuvalu

Tuvalu is an archipelago that consists of six true atolls and three reef islands with a population of 9,561. Its main economy is dependent on fisheries and philatelic sales. The highest point of the land is merely 2m above sea level, and the widest part 80-100m. One of Tuvalu’s islands was inhabited by over 20 houses, but since the aftermath of Hurricane Bibi, 1972 Mr. Emberson noted “the sea has eaten away at the houses,” leaving the island reduced in size with only six remaining homes. The narrowest strip of Tuvalu is



Narrowest strip of Tuvalu

Photo: P. Emberson

at the mercy of being broken by every storm surge; the Taiwanese and Japanese governments have provided assistance in attempts to reinforce the land. Communities within Tuvalu have already been forced to resettle to other islands within the country. Such forced resettlement has led to poverty and impoverishment and has become part and parcel of adaptation in the country.

Mr. Emberson thought the Moana Declaration was clear in its calls, but their trip to Tuvalu made him realize that the member churches and parishioners were not at the same place. UNAW participants are likely versed with the science on climate change, but there was a

sense of near denial among those he encountered in Tuvalu. “The Oceanic people have not come to the point of fully appreciating their situation that their land will be overwhelmed by the sea by 2100 or sooner,” said he.

He stressed the importance of understanding climate change not only as a Pacific concern, but a global problem – an African, European and Oceanic problem.

They visited the small village of Funafala that has six homes and families – this was the previously mentioned village decimated by Hurricane Bibi in 1972. The community is composed of mostly women and children. Women and children are care givers and nurturers, the custodians of tradition knowledge, and Mr. Emberson reaffirmed the need to educate women and children to be the conduits of climate change and developments. Their subsistence livelihoods and staple are fish, breadfruit, pandanus, and coconut today.

During the conversation, community members voiced that resettling



Taro Plants encased in concrete Photo: P. Emberson

was nearly ludicrous – the land is their home and relocation is not an option. For generations, they have lived off the land, and like many indigenous communities, adaptation is a natural part of their existence. Adaptation has become part of their regular and natural existence – food preparation and preservation, water management, foreshore protection, are only some examples. Those in Tuvalu found it difficult to accept future relocation, as adaptation has been the solution for centuries.

For many in Tuvalu adaptation is not linked to climate change adaptation. Those on the outside may be quick to label it as climate change adaptation, but for them it is their traditional knowledge passed down through time. For instance, to protect his taro plants from the rising sea, one pastor encases his taro plants in concrete slabs and uses dried coconut fawns as mulch.

### **The Pacific Council of Churches**

The PCC seeks to help member churches come to terms with climate change and the confronting reality of future resettlement. The methods of confrontation, Mr. Emberson stressed, must rely on indigenous concepts and connections of self, land, church, and government.

The PCC and churches in the Pacific are creating and engaging in activities in line with the Moana Declaration. Among them is their involvement in the Church Leaders Meeting (CLM) and subsequent meetings around the world, UNAW being one example. They are visiting churches to raise awareness on the points outlined in the Moana Declaration and are developing a theology on Climate Change with PTC and ecumenical partners. They are making interventions at the national, regional and international level through meetings with embassies and High Commissioners based in Fiji, distribution of positions among Climate Change networks and partners, and advocacy around COP 15. In closing, Mr. Emberson encouraged UNAW participants to sign the Pacific Climate Change petition.



**Ms. Julia Berger**  
Representative, Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations

For **Ms. Julia Berger**, the discussion around climate change – once confined to scientific communities – has rapidly grown with a level of consciousness that has opened up new avenues for cooperation much needed if the world is to overcome what the UN has referred to as “the defining human development challenge of the 21st century.”

The phenomenon of climate displaced peoples is emblematic of this development challenge. It brings to the fore the ethical and moral questions at the heart of the climate change problem. According to estimates, over 200 million people (perhaps as many as 1 billion) will be forced to give up their homes and relocate due to climate change over the next 40 years. This could be brought on by intensified weather events, including cyclones and droughts or rising sea levels. The latter could lead to the possible ‘disappearance’ of entire states: the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati or Tuvalu would be largely uninhabitable. The evacuation of residents of atolls in Kiribati and Papua New Guinea has already begun. The government of

the Maldives has set aside funds to buy lands in other countries given the probability that the archipelago will become submerged.

Work is already underway to consider the difficult issues of identifying, protecting and resettling climate displaced persons. Yet, as has been noted by religious and, increasingly, by secular leaders: climate change is not only an environmental or economic challenge; it is primarily a moral and ethical challenge.

The growing threats to present and future populations bring us face to face with the values, principles and motivations that have led to the present condition. Without examining these questions, which underlie the physical and economic manifestations of the problem, development processes will not be transformed in a fundamental way.

While questions about climate change are not new, the interest has gained considerable momentum over the past 10 years. As far back as 1992, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change set forth ethical principles to guide countries actions, including giving attention to the specific needs of developing countries; adoption of precautionary measures and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Many ethical questions have been put forward and introduced into intergovernmental debate at the global level. Among them are the following:

- Who is responsible for the consequences of climate change?
- What responsibilities do we have towards one another as nations?
- How should target levels of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere be determined?
- What procedures will ensure fair representation in decision-making?
- What institutional arrangements need to be put in place to discharge those responsibilities?

With respect to climate displaced persons:

- What legal and moral responsibilities do industrialized nations bear for climate displaced persons?
- How should such movements be organized to avoid violence and chaos?
- How should a government determine their share in supporting, financing and facilitating the protection and resettlement of such persons?

Ms. Berger stated that in addition another layer of questions concern the nature of community life and interactions among climate displaced peoples and the receiving communities – such displacement raises challenging questions for both populations:

- How do we address the nationalistic, particularistic, and egocentric views which are exacerbated by the threat of immigration or the presence of immigrant communities?
- For those who risk losing their identity after having been uprooted from their cultural environment, how can they maintain their cultural identity and lead a fulfilling and productive life in their new community?

Underlying the above questions are even more fundamental questions of human nature and behavior, as related to development and climate change. For instance, what assumptions about human nature have given rise to the present economic theories rooted in materialism and self-centeredness? Likewise, what assumptions have given rise to nationalistic and antagonistic political arrangements?

Yet many incorrectly assume that there is general agreement about the answers to these questions; or that they are less relevant to the matters at hand; or that beliefs about these issues are a private matter. The

---

consideration of moral and ethical dimensions is ultimately practical. It provides a better compass (than economic or technical considerations alone) to identify, discuss and scrutinize underlying values. It helps to prioritize actions in the face of competing goals and limited resources, create conditions of trust needed for cooperation, and lend importance to the voices and experiences of the vulnerable.

Perhaps the most compelling model is the complexity and coordination of the human body. The body is a model of unity, which emerges from an extraordinary diversity of form and function. No one would try to explain the life of a healthy body in terms of the principle of competition for scarce resources, or demand that all cells become identical. Human society should be conceived in a similar way. This is not a utopian prescription for community life. The worldwide Bahá'í community, guided by the principle of the oneness of humanity as a core tenet of the Bahá'í Faith, is engaged in a framework of action, which is guiding its communities, across over 180 countries and 40 territories, to channel their energies and talents towards service to humanity. They are offered by Bahá'ís to the broader community with the aim of rebuilding a sense of community, particularly among people of diverse origins, and of building attachment to universal human values. As climate change and other challenges start to mix populations on an unprecedented scale, Bahá'ís are working to develop tools at the local level through a process of action, experimentation, group reflection and deliberation.

An example of the Bahá'í community's efforts with climate displacement, was its assistance in Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. The US Bahá'í community drew on the system of local, regional and national governing bodies in the Bahá'í community to organize their efforts. They also organized devotional meetings where people could come together to pray and be spiritually sustained. On an international level, through its UN Office, the worldwide Bahá'í community endeavors to support the relief efforts in countries throughout the world, sending financial assistance to assist the work of rebuilding devastated communities.

Ms. Berger underlined that the goal is to move towards a rapprochement between discourses on science and morality that have mostly been in isolation from one another. Both are needed, together, to mobilize and direct human energies to the resolution of the problem at hand. Taken together, the methods of science give more objective and systematic approaches to problem solving, while moral considerations concern themselves with those inclinations that motivate action for the common good.

She provided an overview of how the Bahá'ís have been contributing to the theme of the ethical dimension of climate change. Over the past several years, building on their work in the area of sustainable development, the Bahá'í International Community has focused on bringing to the forefront the ethical and moral dimensions of climate change. They have been active at the Commission on Sustainable Development to bring together diverse perspectives to explore these dimensions from a variety of angles — religious, scientific and policy-oriented. Last year, they produced, "Seizing the Opportunity: Redefining the Challenge of Climate Change," which explored the practical application of a core Bahá'í principle of the oneness of humanity to the resolution of climate change at the individual, community, national and international level.

In September, they launched an appeal where they called on leaders gathered at COP 15 to recognize climate justice not merely as a quest for limited resources, but part of an unfolding process towards greater degrees of unity and cooperation among nations as they endeavor to build a sustainable and just civilization. The Bahá'í community joined other world religions for the UN sponsored initiative and created a 7 year plans of actions to protect the environment.

She closed with a quote from the Bahá'í Writings, *"We cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world; his inner life molds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it."*

## Interactive Dialogue

---

**A participant from South Africa** noted that AIDS was treated as an academic issue, where there is a disconnect between what is happening at the academic level and what is happening at a grassroots level. Ordinary folk have no idea about the Copenhagen meeting, and the challenge is that institutions need to find creative ways to take the discussion to the grassroots level before it is too late.

### Response

**Mrs. Kioni** noted the reality that the average person has no idea about what climate change and COP is all about. There is a disconnect even within the church. The AACC is trying to create awareness, and to increase the voice of the church. One effort is to have church leaders engage with Copenhagen.

**Mr. Emberson** said that sometimes the link between grassroots and government is a gap that churches can fill. We need to discuss how we as churches can be the arms to reach out and the voice of reason. The experience in Tuvalu was that the church was willing to accept whatever the government was saying. Greater consciousness is required.

**A participant from from Fiji** noted that one of our keynote speakers, Ms. Lois Dauway threw down the challenge — will we err on the compromise of justice? She wanted to know if we will play on the current playing field or use our power as a church to change the playing field to rebuild a system that has failed.

### Response

**Mrs. Kioni** noted that this is a difficult question that should be reflected by the theologians.

**Ms. Berger** noted that we can show new patterns of community life and raise the standard. We can work in a framework that unites and builds diversity. We can also experiment to see what can be possible when we are inspired by a vision greater than ourselves.



## Thematic Priority II: Indigenous Peoples' Rights

---

**Session Organizers:** Ms. Esmeralda Brown (*Women's Division of the United Methodist Church*), Ms. Maria Chavez-Quispe (WCC), Ms. Kathryn Fournier (*Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the WCC*), and Mr. Malte Lei (*Lutheran Office for World Community*).

Goal: While the establishment of the United Nations as an organization designed to bring peace to all nations in 1945 was praised by many, the UN failed to recognize the distinct voice of indigenous peoples. Seeking to address this problem, from 1985 to 1993, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations drafted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In 1995 a Commission on Human Rights was established to review the drafted document. In 2006, the Human Rights Council adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).<sup>12</sup> One year later in a historic moment, 144 member-states voted for the adoption of the UNDRIP during the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. Australia endorsed the UNDRIP in 2009, though USA, Canada, New Zealand and some islands in the Pacific continue to oppose its adoption. Although a long struggle, the indigenous peoples international movement achieved one of the major international laws (UNDRIP) to defend indigenous peoples' legitimate rights. As Victoria Tauli-Corpuz said in that historic moment: "This is a Declaration which makes the opening phrase of the UN Charter, 'We the Peoples...' meaningful for the more than 370 million indigenous persons all over the world."

Two years after the historic passage of UNDRIP, the biggest challenge continues to be the promotion and implementation of UNDRIP by member-states, UN bodies, indigenous groups, the society at large and the churches.

Member churches of the WCC are present throughout the world and represent at least 560 million Christians. Indigenous peoples, who represent a significant proportion of these Christians, are faithfully showing the indigenous face of the Church of Christ. Inside and outside of the Church body, indigenous people are presenting the proposal of the *Good Living/Suma Qamaña/Sumaj Kawsay* as the framework for the reflection of action and faith.

Despite UNDRIP's adoption, violations of indigenous peoples rights continue. Due to economic reasons related to natural resources, human rights and property rights are trampled upon. This is especially the case in regard to land rights. Peru and West Papua are just two examples of what is happening in the daily life of indigenous peoples in the world.

The sessions on Indigenous Peoples Rights will address the following questions:

- How has UNDRIP advanced the cause of attenuating struggles of indigenous peoples?
- How are churches engaged with indigenous peoples struggles especially related to land rights and criminalization of those pursuing these rights?
- How can the churches support the promotion and implementation of UNDRIP?

---

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_es.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_es.pdf)



It is important for churches to strengthen the reconciliation process because of the churches' historic involvement in colonization and violence against Indigenous Peoples.

### Indigenous Peoples Rights Worship – Tuesday Morning

*[A note from the Chaplain's journal]*

Monday afternoon, Indigenous Peoples staff member Maria Chavez gathered those who were representing indigenous peoples for a lunch meeting. From there, all were gathered in the Tillman Chapel and within a ½ hour the order of worship had been transformed and brought into being by this incredibly rich group. The worship didn't include a sermon. It was infused with a prayer to Mother Earth, blessings from the indigenous communities, prayers of petition, music from indigenous cultures, drumming, smudging and the responsive song of *Oré poriaju vereko Ñandejara*. Those gathered on Tuesday morning were enraptured by the gift.



Indigenous Worship Session

Photo: M. Beach

### IPR Session I: Indigenous Peoples' Rights – the Journey to UNDRIP

Goal: Session one sought to present the testimonies of indigenous peoples efforts to achieve UNDRIP. Testimonies would offered how UNDRIP continues to advance the struggles of indigenous peoples. Although UNDRIP has been accepted by many member states as a declaration, the session highlighted ongoing obstacles faced by indigenous peoples. Panelists would provide examples of opportunities for church involvement in promotion and implementation the UNDRIP.

**Moderator**

**Ms. Kathryn Fournier**

Senior Policy Advisor, Government of Canada

**Ms. Kathryn Fournier** expressed most heartfelt thanks to those who created a sacred space out of the ancient indigenous ceremonies and traditions during worship; it provided a moving transition for the session for Indigenous People's Rights (IPR). The session would focus on examining IPR through the lens of UNDRIP in its promotion and implementation. At the time of its establishment the UN did not recognize or "uphold the distinct voice" of indigenous peoples. This was then challenged, and as a result things have changed with the the establishment of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms on the situation of indigenous people, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (body of the Human Rights Council), the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues and the most significant UNDRIP.

---

## Ms. Esmeralda Brown

Executive Secretary, Global Justice Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries

---

**Ms. Brown** began with a call on the assistance of her indigenous ancestors. She addressed the concept that “the United Nations (UN) could be very intimidating to indigenous peoples even though its mission says “we the people.” In the face of intimidation, indigenous peoples continue their struggle for basic human rights.

The history of indigenous peoples and their fight for rights predates the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. There were attempts prior to those at the UN to raise the critical issue of Indigenous Peoples Rights (IPR) at the League of Nations. This ongoing effort for IPR was echoed soon afterward once the UN was founded.

At the 500-year mark of the occupation of the indigenous peoples’ lands in the Americas and many were ready to celebrate what was called “The Discovery.” The alternative perspective sees this “celebration” as 500 years of oppression, genocide and abuse of indigenous peoples, which they have fought to resist. The indigenous President of Bolivia, Evo Morales, reinforced that this was not a celebratory moment; instead what should have been acknowledged was “the invasion”, and the absolute violations of human rights indigenous peoples faced.



Indigenous peoples were able to gain influence at the UN through the declaration of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People in 1993 with the solidarity of indigenous peoples, peoples of African descent and other peoples of good will. When the year ended it was considered a failed year that sparked the establishment of the UN decade of the World of Indigenous Peoples established in 1994, followed by the second decade for the World of Indigenous Peoples from 2004-2014.

A major turning point was in 2007 when the draft for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was submitted and adopted by the General Assembly. Signs of progress can be seen through the permanent position of the UNPFII and the strides of indigenous persons who include a Nobel Peace Prize winner and the President of Bolivia.

From the history of the IPR movement, Ms. Brown urged churches to reflect on their role in the IPR movement and to review concrete efforts made to work along side indigenous peoples. One approach would be to use the World Council of Churches resources to influence the “voices of power and other denominations to walk with indigenous peoples to ensure that action plans and commitments made by governments are met.”

In closing, Ms. Brown said that institutions, systems and peoples that perpetuate the violations against indigenous peoples should remember that “Indigenous Peoples are also God’s children, the children of the earth.”

---

## Ms. Tonya Frichner

Vice Chairperson, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

---

**Ms. Frichner** opened by giving tribute to Esmeralda Brown best known as “the Madre of the indigenous peoples” in all her work and support. Esmeralda Brown, Mia Adjali and the United Methodist Church are the reasons why indigenous peoples have a home at the Church Center to the United Nations.



Ms. Frichner Photo: M. Beach

Coincidentally, in the same month [November] UNAW is taking place, the United States celebrates the Native American Indigenous Peoples Month. Native Americans played an essential role in building the framework of the United States, with a historically diplomatic “nations to nations” relationship that was based on treaty agreements. For over fifteen hundred years six nations united under the Iroquois Confederacy, which had an established Constitution “The Great Law of Peace.” Major components of this constitution, such as the freedom of religion, and expression, were later incorporated into the United States Constitution. Components of the Iroquois Constitution were considered models alongside others when the United Nations was in the process of being established.

Steps have been taken by the Obama administration to invite 564 federally recognized native nations to meet for an indigenous peoples summit and “finally face the consequences of centuries of neglect.” From this meeting, an order was established and signed by President Obama that focused on the enhancement of the US government’s relationships with Native American sovereign tribes. One problematic system in use today is the process by which nations apply for recognition to receive federal aid. Over 550 nations fall under the non-recognized category and therefore are not eligible for any form of federal support and were not invited to the indigenous summit. These non-recognized nations have applied numerous times and have been repeatedly denied because of the restrictive criteria for approval placed by the Department of the Interior under the US federal government. Therefore, these unrecognized nations are not able to receive any form of education, healthcare, and any other services provided by the federal government.

On some of the Native American reservations, the unemployment rate is 80 percent, and 25 percent of residents live in poverty, which was stated by President Obama. The Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University estimates that it would take about 3 generations of American Indians to get parity with other Americans’ standard of living. These people are left behind with “no real consultation or communication” from the federal government, as a result President Obama stated that full partnership is essential to addressing these issues. This is concept of a partnership with indigenous Peoples and government is fully supported by UNPFII.

Support from the church communities to push forward this movement for Indigenous Peoples Rights is essential. Examples such as holding the Obama administration accountable for the promises and mandates proposed, and promoting UNDRIP to those UN member states that have not yet adopted it. Furthermore, the church should encourage the monitoring of UN member countries that have adopted the declaration to ensure that it is put into practice. In addition for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2010 assistance will be needed in sponsoring indigenous women from around the world to offer their testimonies for the caucuses that will be held.

The state of Main, Arizona, Salt River People, the White Earth People, National Congress of American Indians have all adopted the UNDRIP and this movement has been driven from a grassroots level in the US utilizing a “bottom up approach.”

## Ms. Carol Pollack

Secretariat, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

“We meet today at a time when the situation of Indigenous Peoples in various parts of the world continues to be critical. Indigenous peoples have been excluded from economic and political power, experience systemic discrimination and are pushed from ancestral land. “But we also meet at a time when indigenous movements have achieved remarkable recent success.” As a United Nations Representative Ms. Pollack evaluates the content and progress of UNDRIP as well as the history of the relationship between the UN and indigenous peoples.



Recent accomplishments range from the election of an indigenous President in Bolivia, the countries in the North issuance of formal apologies for the violations of indigenous people, and ultimately the adoption of UNDRIP by a majority of UN member states. In light of these accomplishments the recognition of barriers in this advocacy struggle must also be addressed the IPR movement can be described as “the story of a door that was closed but was opened as a result of the work of a International Indigenous Rights Movement.”

One of the most significant victories for the world’s indigenous populations was the UNDRIP. There was a two-decade battle that resulted in its adoption. “It reflects the increased prioritization of indigenous peoples issues at the UN.” Initially, the group set out to create UNDRIP and placed decision making in the hands of an intergovernmental body not indigenous people. In response, the indigenous peoples threatened to walk out of the entire process and finally won that battle by having their voices heard with a large role in the decision making process of drafting and negotiating the text of UNDRIP.

## Interactive Dialogue

**A Participant from Fiji** asked in the statistics of poverty; where are the women, and do the women have ownership of traditional resources? In getting prior and informed consent, what language are these contractual agreements provided in?

**A Participant from United States** In spite of the awesome witness that UNAW provides, how can the church gain support and awareness on the issues discussed?

**A Participant from Germany** Does a database on the violations of human rights exist?

## Response

---

**Ms. Tonya Frichner, United States** explained that the life expectancy for indigenous men is in the high 40s, while Native American women are in the low 50s in the United States (US). In the US, there are different methods to land ownership than in the different native regions. With regards to the ownership of the property, some instances allow for the communal ownership of the land and resources that may be given back to the nation; however property ownership stays with the women.

There are a multitude of indigenous people's rights violations around the world. Security of borders presents an issue in certain instance of herding, sex trafficking, and other criminal activities. Documentation of such violations is beginning, but it is uncertain if there is an actual database.

**Ms. Esmeralda Brown, United States** noted that as locals attempt to extract the resources of their own land, they are severely restrained by governments. The struggle has been centered on the land and natural resources. As a result, people have been killed for attempting to resist multinationals that are exploiting their resources. It is rare to hear about issues such as these outside of sessions like UNAW because many others are afraid to speak.

**Ms. Carol Pollack, United States** evaluated the language that describes the clauses of "prior consent" to resource extraction must be in the language that the natives speak. There are many historical instances when people have attempted to get others to sign documents in a language foreign to the signatory, which resulted in a void document.

The churches should increase awareness and support for indigenous peoples at the UN, its field offices, in training, and partake in further dialogue.

Ms. Pollack was in agreement with Ms. Frichner of not being aware of a database of human rights violations.

## **IPR Session II: Testimonies of the struggle and possible steps for solutions**

---



**Goal:** This session allowed testimonies about the lives of indigenous peoples, the main problems they have faced, as well as the solutions they have formulated. One examination focused on strategizing around how UNDRIP can be a useful and necessary tool to address some of these problems. Furthermore, it identified how Churches are helping, and future ways they can work alongside indigenous peoples in the struggles for justice. The session also facilitated understanding of the ways that the church and indigenous peoples can partner to become more just and inclusive communities.

**Moderator**

**Rev. Dr. Ferdinand Anno**

Professor of Liturgy at Union Theological Seminary

---



In 1492 the sun went dark for us in Latin America. 40 million people were massacred when the colonizers came. They came with the cross and the sword. They raped our mothers and imposed foreign languages on us.

Columbus claimed that he discovered the Americas when in fact there were already people there. In attempts to justify the brutality towards the indigenous peoples, settlers described indigenous peoples as “soul-less”. Ms. Guacho states, “yet we [indigenous peoples] knew how to listen to the cries of the people and the earth.” This phrase displayed a soul with a respect for Mother Nature along with a sincere reverence of God’s teaching, as the Bible says we should love God and all things. Initially, the indigenous communities shared love, peace, community life, and values. These values had been destroyed during the process of exploitation imposed on by foreign settlers. Despite this, many in the world were ready to celebrate what they considered “The Discovery” during the 500<sup>th</sup> year of occupation. It “was not a discovery, rather they intruded by not recognizing indigenous peoples culture, history and way of life.”

Ms. Guacho continued with an anecdote. When she was 7, a blessed Bishop empowered the indigenous peoples, by helping to promote agrarian resources. In the past, the foreign settlers would sell the natives as part of the land. Liberation Theology and even churches were involved in destroying the indigenous peoples’ land. That same bishop was slowly sharing Liberation theology. Throughout this process, indigenous peoples continued to struggle in attempts to maintain the authenticity of their lives, knowledge, values, clothing, food, and incorporating it into the education of the younger generations.

The indigenous peoples started to learn how to read and write after colonization, but many were arrested when involved in the struggle to defend their rights. In 1984 there was already an organizing of the indigenous peoples ready to demand their rights. This struggle for justice has been long and arduous, with little or no governmental support. This elongated process is exemplified in the creation of UNDRIP. The first recorded version of UNDRIP was presented 20 years ago and has just recently been adopted in 2006 by the UN.



Ms. Guacho was directly involved with the indigenous uprising. In 2000, there was an invitation from the UN giving indigenous communities the opportunity share their concerns. In attempts to enter the UN, many indigenous representatives were turned away including Ms. Guacho. The first place they turned to was the Methodist Church where sister Esmeralda Brown provided gracious hospitality when the indigenous representative were left with no food, lodging, or resources. “I showed up here at the Church Center in 2000 and this building has been my home ever since.” Indigenous peoples are now recognized at the UN, thanks to the help of the Women’s Division of the United Methodist Church and the Church Center for the UN.

A brother from the World Council of Churches in Latin America coordinated and provided training to delegates, helped finance programs, created unity and formulated petitions that communicated the indigenous experiences with independent on a particular government or religion. The indigenous people



want to know all the work that the UN has been done on behalf of indigenous peoples. The support and assistance from all allies of indigenous peoples is greatly appreciated. Many barriers have been broken, specifically with the help of sister Esmeralda, with all thanks given to God.

“I came by bus from Ecuador when there was no place in the UN to cast my concerns and now the UN has a Special Rapporteur for human rights,” said Ms. Guacho. In the past it was puzzling to see the president of Mexico killing people, while human rights legislation remained in his hands, such unjust laws and practice must be challenged. The treatment of women and other malpractices need to be denounced; if these issues are left in the hands of the government the legislation does not ensure implementation.

The invitation is extended to those ready to accompany the indigenous advocates and work from a grassroots level. Accompaniment at this level would mean that each individual can learn from each others’ own realities. The NGOs have proven to be ineffective, as they say they have money for education and health but want to dictate how these services are used. Limitations like these do not take into account or respect the ancestral knowledge or values of the indigenous peoples.

The government needs to appreciate the principals of the indigenous peoples rather than continue to impose on them. Ms. Guacho concluded that “When her people speak, the earth cries. This morning I was also crying, feeling wounded because our peoples values are being destroyed.”

**Ms. Musanga Timani**  
Coordinator, ACPROD-BATWA

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is comprised of many indigenous communities and all the provinces are inhabited by indigenous peoples. The Bambuti or Batwa (Pygmies) are the indigenous peoples from the East. In 1994 the lives of these people were destroyed as a result of a refugee invasion in that region.

The Forest Code 2002,<sup>13</sup> a national law implemented in DRC, fails to encompass a comprehensive policy that conserves the environment while protecting the Pygmy natives. The DRC constitution does not even include the rights of these people and their ownership or right to the land. Forest Code 2002 does not even provide a space that belongs to the Pygmies, thus leaving these families “dispossessed of their ancestral grounds.”

The adoption of the Declaration of the United Nations on the Rights of the Autochtones (Indigenous Peoples) UNDRIP offers a ray of hope. However, many member states that have adopted the declaration are far from the process of materializing the mandates it entails. Advocates for UNDRIP are waiting for the declaration to be adopted by the DRC. There is a large population of people in the DRC that refuse to even recognize the presence of the Bambuti and Pygmies in the country.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/FPP.pdf> “Persistent and Pervasive Racial Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in the Democratic Republic of Congo”

<sup>13</sup> <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/FPP.pdf> “Persistent and Pervasive Racial Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in the Democratic Republic of Congo”

The necessary tools utilized in advocating for the rights of indigenous peoples are the UNDRIP, all conventions related to women and children's rights, the constitutions of states, and the religious organizations and ecumenical synergy used to lobby and hold states accountable. The church has been the institution best suited to facilitate the adoption and implementation of such tools by exercising the right to call on moral and spiritual assistance.

As a result of wars by armed groups and militias, indigenous peoples are driven from their homelands. The land is occupied by outside forces without agreement, consultation, or compensation paid to the indigenous peoples. The Pygmies are "expelled brutally from the forests during the creation or expansion of national parks." Discrimination of the Pygmies has led to high rates of unemployment, poverty, scarce health care and infrastructure with no sanitary facilities. Childbirth without medical intervention has led to high infant mortality and the displaced Pygmies do not have equal access to education.

The WCC should solicit the UN to promote member states to adopt UNDRIP and implement measures that hold member states already bound to the declaration accountable. WCC can contribute to the adoption of UNDRIP by the states and monitor its application at all levels. Indigenous delegates from each country can be supported by the WCC to serve as a representative in pleading their cases to member states of the UN that have not adopted UNDRIP. In addition, the WCC must provide support to churches and organizations devoted to the improvement and/or creation of an educational system for deprived children and adult members of the indigenous population.

The World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, OMPI as well as other organizations must collaborate in efforts to gain recognition and funding for promotion and preservation of indigenous languages, cultures and religions.

### **Rev. Matheus Adadikam**

Superintendent, Protestant Church in Timika, West Papua Indigenous Situation

**Rev. Matheus Adadikam** expressed his concern that the positive appearance of government aid to the Papuans contrasts starkly with the reality of what has been taking place. Regulations set in 1945 specify that the land belongs to the government and is to be used as community property. Much of the legislation has led to governmental control of the rights of the Papuan under the umbrella of institutionalized programs that address transmigration, forest processing and mining activities. 250 Papuan tribes occupy around 406,958.67 km of land, prior to the integration period of the Dutch in 1696 this land was abundant in rich resources.



In the transmigration program the Papuans have been pressured by the government to cede their land for housing projects and the construction of roads. The government encouraged an influx of outsiders into the land of the Papuans by providing financial support exclusively to them for the duration of two years. In some instances these settlers have actually sold the captured land back to the Papuans, even though it was originally the Papuan's.



Photo Mr. Adadikam

In other instances these settlers have actually sold the captured land back to the Papuans, even though it was originally the Papuan's.

The Javanese settlers have integrated into the transmigration communities, and in many cases the younger generations of Papuans are more familiar with the Javanese culture than their own. The local government was asked to stop providing incentives, in the form of discounts for foreigner investors; this has led to the gentrification of Papuan communities.

The lack of government regulations on forest processing and mining had negatively impacted the daily lives of Papuans. Agreements were made between the government and mining corporations with no consent of the Papuan population who has been directly affected by the environmental degradation.

Education in Papua began in 1855 by two German missionaries. This was followed by three periods of education: Zen period 1855-1956, the Dutch period 1956-1963, and the Indonesian Period after integration 1969-2009. Education during the Zen era mainly concentrated on converting Papuans into evangelists. The Dutch period was a time where some Papuans had access to education; this system incorporated the history and culture of Papua. Unfortunately during the Indonesian period, the education received has been of poor quality. This particular regime does not take into account the character and culture of Papuans instead it depicted them as "lazy idiots". Evidence of this oversight is apparent with the non-use of native dialects in all of the primary education.

Teachers are in high demand and to meet this need the government has recruited teachers without training them. Schools once run by churches have now become government schools. Students are passed to the next grade level without passing any standardized tests. Although reports from the Department of Education suggest that the education in rural areas have been well run, facts show otherwise in cases where some students are illiterate even at the university level.

Diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis are found in the lower regions of Papuan, where many non-natives live. In remote areas the healthcare facilities are poor and many health related issues are prominent. Since the 1980's the presence of HIV has left specific regions with high statistics of infected populations; the largest infected Papuan population of 2009 was located in Mimika Regency with 2,005 cases of HIV/AIDS.



Photo Courtesy of Mr. Adadikam

There have been murder cases in the highlands of Papua in which the shooters responsible have not been caught. As a response, the government has sent a fear inducing military force which has left the Papuans feeling unsafe. Around 1500 Indonesian military troops have been brought into the region of Timika where the shootings occurred, and in some cases the military has begun to recruit militia members.

Indonesia's special regulations for Papuans were established in 2001 and have yet to be implemented. It is apparent that the Papuans have not had the opportunity to exercise their rights to safety and autonomy. The limited access to proper health care, education and right to land and culture still persists.

Rev. Matheus Adadikam's father left home with his brothers and sisters and the remaining family. The family that remained was killed by the military. For a long time, he tried not to hate those who killed his people because his father taught him not to hate but to love. This was one scenario of the many atrocities inflicted on the Papuan communities. In order for the special regulations on Papuan rights to be implemented by the Indonesian government, partnership between the Papuan advocates, the UN, international organizations, and churches must be created.

**Mr. Argemiro Bailarin Bailarin**

Community Defense Committee of Urada Jiguamiando

---

**Mr. Bailarin Bailarin** framed his address around the examination of mechanisms that give way to the exploitation of indigenous peoples' land in Colombia. The North American Company Muriel Mining Corporation began mining exploration in January 2009, in a region which was occupied by Afro-Colombians and three indigenous communities. This process offered no consultation or request for permission from those affected, despite the demands of the Community Defense Committee, comprised of the affected communities. Mr. Bailarin Bailarin, who is directly involved in cultivating the languages, writings and traditions of the indigenous peoples in this region, described this mining exploration as exploitation that "threatens the cultural integrity of the communities." There have been blatant human rights violations and resource extractions that have been challenged through legal, political and direct action.

The Afro-Colombians and indigenous peoples have united to reject the mining company. Lawsuits were filed demanding compensation for constitutional violations, yet constitutional courts favored the mining companies. Although the courts declared that there should be protection of the displaced populations, there has been no compliance or implementation of this mandate.

The Community Defense Committee of Urada Jiguamiando (hence Community Defense Committee) unit holds consultations within their own communities in efforts to encourage and build self-determination of people and their land. Viewing "the land as our mother, we must respect it. [The mining corporations] are attacking our spirit by violating our land." The Community Defense Committee unit can no longer passively wait for the National Congress of Colombia to recognize these apparent violations. He said, "we invite the WCC to learn about and support us."

Afro-Colombian Communities are being displaced by Palm production. The Community Defense Committee unit combating this forced migration and exploitation has been anxious to align with any willing party to push for investigations, publication of environmental and social studies of the negative impacts, as well as document of the other injustices practiced.

Dams, oil exploration, and other development projects continue without consideration of the affected people. Some of the indigenous communities are on the verge of extinction, which amplifies the need for greater and more urgent visibility worldwide. The area surrounding the hill of "Careperro," considered sacred land to the indigenous peoples, has been deemed to have major geological potential for the Muriel Mining Corporation. Unfortunately, this company, with the protection of the military, has begun phase one

of a mining exploration in January 2009 which can take four to six months; following that is the second phase of approximately two years duration and is a more invasive process requiring heavy machinery and intense exploration.

As a response, the Community Defense Committee unit comprised of indigenous communities living directly in the area of “Careperro” along with Afro-Colombians held internal consultations where 1,251 people participated. Out of these 1,251 people, 784 were given veto power in which they were given the discretion to vote on behalf of the larger communities on whether they objected to or accepted the mining exploration in and around their homes. A unanimous vote rejected the mining project.

UNDRIP provides a major component in supporting a solution to the situation of exploitation of resources and lack of land rights for the indigenous peoples. The declaration places the responsibility in the hands of the state to seek the consent of the interests of the indigenous people prior to any adoption of legislation or administrative measures. This provides legal and political recognition and protection of indigenous people’s rights to land, self-determination and resources.

The World Council of Churches should deeply consider the issues brought fourth in these sessions of UNAW.

## Interactive Dialogue

---

**A Participant from United States** asked at what point do we adopt the principle of looking at all the people that have been defrauded and pay them back. Is UNAW the place that we can deal with this agenda?

**A Participant from Fiji** brought to attention that West Papua and human rights violations were dropped from the agenda of the United Nations. He asked, what are some steps the church can take to put it back on the UN agenda?

**A Participant from Burundi** provided the African context, that there have been rights for the colonizers and rights for the religious people, yet nothing for Africans. Many times churches are accomplices that do not want to recognize the values of the people. One step for these churches to take is to ask for forgiveness, the other is to ask for understanding in recognition of the wrong doings that cannot be repaid. The economic incentive is one that is always behind the agenda. The south is not as poor as the north presents it to be; yet the South is constantly depicted as a basis for poverty. How can churches reveal this truth to the rest of the world?

---



### **Thematic Priority III: Colombia**

---

**Session Organizers:** Mr. Tito Cantreras (Caritas Internationalis), Mr. Joe Donnelly (Caritas Internationalis), Rev. Christopher Ferguson (WCC), Ms. Karen Flores, Mr. Carlos Ham (WCC), Ms. Jessica Hawkinson (Presbyterian UN Office), and Rev. Doug Hostetter (Mennonite Central Committee) in collaboration with Colombian partners.

For over 40 years, the conflict in Colombia has made the country one of the world's most violent hot spots. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed, with an average of 14 civilians murdered everyday, and more than two million Colombians driven from their homes. The conflict is fueled by violent disputes over land, unjust military control, and rights to resources, including oil. Some United Nations agencies continue to keep Colombia as a priority, but the UN Security Council has shown no willingness to take up the issue of the war in Colombia.

The United Nations Advocacy Week focus on Colombia will seek to listen to Colombian voices, in addition to working together to answer these questions:

- How might the world's churches give voice to those who suffer?
- How can the churches stand in solidarity with Colombians involved in the struggle for justice and peace in their country?

The United Nations Advocacy Week created a space in which Colombian voices would define and lead the advocacy efforts in answering such questions.

---

#### **Colombia – Wednesday Morning Worship**

*[A note from the Chaplain's journal]*

*On Wednesday morning Colombian attendees devoted to their culture, lifted prayers for their people. Fueled by the love of their country and its rich traditions, the worship service was offered through the spoken word and music. After pleading for the people of Colombia and highlighting the strife they face, the group presented gifts that had political and communal significance which have been the solace and inspiration for communities throughout Colombia.*



---

#### **Colombia Session I: The Need for Advocacy**

---



The first session allowed Colombian leaders to share their testimonies of advocacy and work for justice and peace. They explored such diverse themes as: displaced people, indigenous peoples, other ethnic minorities as well as the impact of resettlement and climate change on the country.

**Moderator**

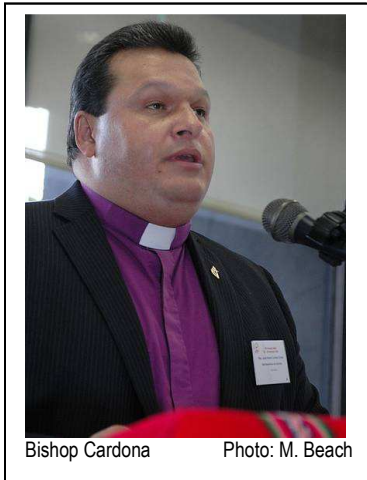
**Rev. Doug Hostetter**

Director, UN Office Mennonite Central Committee

**Assistant Moderator**

**Mr. Tito Conteras**

Advocacy Assistant of Caritas Internationalis



**Bishop Juan Alberto Cardona Gomez**

Bishop of the Methodist Church in Colombia

**Bishop Juan Alberto Cardona Gomez** stated he was speaking on behalf of the churches in favor of a “new peaceful Colombia.” The positions of churches are diverse and can be broken up into three main categories: victims, accomplices, and those that are neutral that evade responsibility. In attempts to reveal the “prophetic voice that denounces the injustice” some churches have become martyrs and exiles that have faced unavoidable displacement.

Neutral churches are ignoring the apparent realities of war and violence. This “false neutrality” ignores the “perverse reality” that is inescapable in the nation. The indifference of neutrality stems from a loss of hope and quality of life.

These ideologies have been passed down through generations, leaving them with the notion that the only future that exists is one of war. Inaction and silence are viewed as the only options for avoiding violence.

The “accomplices” are agents of violence who produce paramilitary, guerilla fighters, narcotic traffickers and delinquents. War tends to trigger the population into fear, panic and desperation. Violence is then perceived as the only alternative for survival and turns the population into a submissive mass.

Bishop Cardona urged the churches to take a proactive approach by utilizing “our imagination and creativity” to reconstruct a peaceful Colombia. This is in line with Scripture, which says, “we saw a new Heaven and a new earth.” He emphasized specific proposals of advocating among churches in favor of peace, partnering with churches in risk zones to strengthen them as peace builders, and creating alliances with state officials, municipalities, and civil societies. The church must undergo an “informative, transformative” process, which deepens theological tools such as the creation of peace materials produced from an ecumenical effort. Specifically at UNAW, Bishop Gomez invited all delegates to build a concrete proposal that the Colombian representatives could take home and implement as an advocacy program.

He closed with the final words, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; Not as the world gives do I give to you. (John 14:27).”

**Rev. Jario Suarez** recounted his observation of the armed conflict and systematic violation of human rights in Colombia. The end result is a “false positive” methodology in Colombia where innocent victims of the armed conflict are identified as “deaths in combat.” These illegal war crimes have been excused by public enforcement and the government. Victims of war have witnessed these “false positives” and deemed them as human rights violations against the civil population. These human rights violations are grave infractions of the fundamental international human rights laws, which have left victims as targets of political persecution, social intolerance, and excess abuse.

The UN Special Rapporteur on arbitrary executions provided a narrative for these “false positive” incidences in Colombia in his preliminary reports (June 2009).<sup>14</sup> For example, a recruiter deceives the victim with a “false proposal” and lures them to a remote locality. Victims are then met by military forces that execute them and in turn manipulate the crime scene as if the victims were perpetrators of violence. In some cases, staged scenes of victims re-dressed in guerilla uniforms with grenades in hand are created as forms of false propaganda, and then used as evidence while the assassins are rewarded for producing these doctored images.



Although Mr. Suarez explained that he cannot discard the fact that some of these “false positives” are guerilla fighters, many cases are made up of flawed evidence and contradictory testimonies from family members. For instance, one piece of false propaganda included a youth found dressed in shoes four sizes too big, a clear indication that the crime scene was manipulated. Mr. Suarez provided another example of a young man with the mental age of a nine year old that was murdered but his death was labeled as a “death in combat.” Examples of contradictory evidence ranges from pictures of victims dressed in clothes freshly ironed to left-handed people taking a pistol in their right hand. To further convolute this already complex system, families of victims and their lawyers are being threatened by assassins. These “strategies are used as a form of control and repression against human rights defenders and constructors of peace.”

This reward system was one that offers incentives for the alliance of criminals and public enforcement, because public rewards cannot be given to official enforcement directly. These alliances have provoked an increase in “corpse manufacturing-killing for reward” which has intensified the situation since 2005. Statistical denunciations have increased from 73 in 2005, to 122 in 2006, and 245 in 2007.

As a result of the internal armed conflict, another strategy implemented by armed groups was the indiscriminate planting of land mines to control advancement of troops. Many of these mines are planted with no direct plan or mapping system, therefore making it almost impossible to later identify and remove these mines. In addition,

---

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.extrajudicialexecutions.org/application/media/Colombia\\_Press\\_Statement\\_English1.pdf](http://www.extrajudicialexecutions.org/application/media/Colombia_Press_Statement_English1.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.extrajudicialexecutions.org/application/media/Colombia\\_Press\\_Statement\\_English1.pdf](http://www.extrajudicialexecutions.org/application/media/Colombia_Press_Statement_English1.pdf)

the degradation of land by the planting of mines affects farming by contaminating the environment and blocking water access. Landmines will be dangerous for the next three to four generations, as their lifespan is about 100 years.

Some armed groups have developed mechanisms in which the mines are camouflaged in common objects called “explosive traps.” Some accidents show that these “explosive traps” disguised as toys, beer bottles and cigarettes, threaten and kill innocent victims and children. Colombia was at the top of the list for victims per year in mining accidents, with a total of 777 injured and 156 deaths for 2008. These recorded reports were an underestimate because they do not include the undocumented deaths and injuries of families in the countryside who fear retaliation. In 2009 alone reports up until September estimated 491 incidents and 88 deaths.

International organizations need to assist with land mine clearance so that civilians are able to plant crops, grow food, raise animals and have access to water. Programs must be established where safe behaviors are taught to avoid mines and other risky situations where potential mines are planted. This would “enable leaders, women, men, and the youth to have a country free of mines and walk peacefully.” The focus should be put on the creation of a suitable environment for victims and a support system should be put in place to prevent future victims.

### **Ms. Maria Mercedes Duque-Lopez**

Deputy Manager, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe Regional Office for Latin America



Ms. Duque-Lopez

Photo: M. Beach

“I felt close to the displaced population and thought I would give a face to the victims of this displacement.” Ms. Duque-Lopez provided a personal account that began with the experience of displacement in her own family. Her brother was filled with anguish from the forced displacement, imposed upon him and his family as the only means for survival. Ms. Duque-Lopez went to visit Colombia children who were able to explain the stories of displacement of their families as a result of ensuing violence.

It is a complicated humanitarian crisis; on average one in 10 Colombians have been displaced. In addition, it is likely that these statistics may be even higher, as only 70 percent of the population is registered. Many of these unregistered civilians are from the countryside where the actions of armed groups are extremely prevalent. 70 percent of the population in Colombia is comprised of children ages 0 to five. Even before wrestling with the burden of displacement, most of these children will suffer from severe poverty.

About 5.5 million hectares of land have been abandoned; this does not include the displacement of the Afro-Colombian population whose lands have been invaded by military forces. Massive migrations resulting in forced displacement can be attributed to the exploitation by multinationals for the production of palm and bio fuels, strategic corridors for drug and weapon transportation, and the planting of land mines.

Guerrilla and paramilitary forces manipulate state policies to exert power over the exploited populations. Many forces go as far as taking over schools, public spaces, and misusing symbols of humanitarian groups to promote their own interest. The current political economy is in favor of economic gain at the price of displaced

peoples and humanitarian needs. Food insecurity is also a persistent issue in Colombia which has a huge impact on health. The combination of these factors has increased dependence on the black market.

International agencies such as the United Nations (UN) do have a presence and have initiated programs in Colombia. However, UN agencies are restricted to the language that official documents use regarding the conflict in Colombia. For example, terms like “armed conflict” and “humanitarian crisis”. Any phraseology of this kind would be removed from all UN communication involving Colombia. These regulations in legal documents distort the reality of the situation and needs of Colombians.

A campaign to guard the defenders of human rights is necessary. The systemic issues taking place in Colombia need to be dealt with on a global scale to protect the vulnerable populations that experience multiple violations of human rights.

### **Professor Lilia Solano**

Director, Project Justice for Life

**Professor Solano** opened by honoring the voice of victims in Colombia. It is documented that more than 30,000 persons are missing. What is the logic behind this conflict? The non-official version would read that the historically rich who hold political, military and economic power, imposed the degradation of the rest of the population.

One of the many issues of concern is centered on security and the US military occupation in Colombia. The US Army has been present in Colombia for a number of years; naval bases such as Apiay, Malambo, Palanquero, Cartegena and Malaga are being overtaken by US troops. This occupation has been a “flagrant violation of the sovereignty of the country” causing a high level of dependence on the US army which has compromised the autonomy of the Colombian government.



The location of US military bases in foreign lands has been a controversial topic, and Professor Solano viewed this power shift to US military bases as having a “day-to-day effect on common life where these bases are established” under the discretion of US based companies. This parasitic relationship begins when the host countries agree upon the deployment of US military personnel and the manufacturing of military bases. This tangled web of “neo-colonialism and dependency” has shifted the US presence from developed countries like Germany into countries “governed by dictatorial regimes.” These targeted host countries offer impunity to US military personnel guilty of degrading the environment.

Colombia is viewed as a “gem” in terms of geopolitical strategy with convenient access to air and sea routes. The Colombian government under the “Uribe Administration” focused on security and the maintenance of favorable conditions for foreign investors. In turn, “this translates to a military strategy of war that views social movements and insurgency under one common enemy of the state.” This strategy takes on the title of “democratic security”, when in reality the outcome represents a deviation from democratic progress.

Professor Solano outlined more examples of negative outcomes under “democratic security” and stated that steps in favor of peace in Colombia must begin with fighting against the impunity proposed during military dictatorship. The state needs to be held responsible for human rights violations such as extrajudicial executions, genocide, and disappearances. As noted, the targets are mostly people who oppose the military regime and those who try to organize social movements against the atrocities taking place. Although many tribunals attempt to institute justice, it is often difficult to convict the criminals because of the impunity of the Colombian state.

The increase of foreign investment has demonstrated the multinational companies’ involvement in the country. There have even been instances in which some multinational corporations’ involvement in the conflict has been documented; for example British Petroleum Company, Nestle, and especially the Canadian mining companies. These companies were not reprimanded for their invidious actions and the only consequences they faced when confronted was a mandatory workshop on ethics as a solution to conflict.

Another challenge would be to question the investments that have been funneled into training the military forces that violate human rights; meanwhile there is a strict denial of funding for other projects.

Churches need to work with Colombians, and international organizations that strive for peace in Colombia must be centered on a humanitarian agreement that puts an end to the armed conflict. We must also acknowledge that Colombia houses political prisoners and conscious prisoners who are labeled as terrorists because of their differing ideals from those in power. Freedom must be given to people that were kidnapped during the conflict as well.

The United Church of Canada (UCC) has been an ally of peace and humanitarian rights for Colombia. One campaign of the UCC was to free the political prisoners via a petition that was circulated.

Another approach would be to contest the pending free trade agreement which the US and Canada intend to sign an agreement, which would provide legitimacy to the crimes committed in Colombia. The international presence is powerful in Colombia, and unfortunately large businesses are apathetic to human rights violations taking place. It is essential for the churches’ presence to be of good faith, peace and on the side of the victims against impunity.

## Interactive Dialogue

---

### Round I

**A Participant from Democratic Republic of Congo** began by expressing solidarity with the people of Colombia, as Congo has continued to suffer from conflict as well. An aspect missing in the presentation on Colombia was the theme of reconciliation. Congo is now in a time of reconciliation in the post war period. The church sided with and consoled war victims. The alternative measure to reconciliation is perpetuating the cycle of violence, revenge and hatred.

As a united force UNAW can help explore the different ways of efficient reconciliation.



**A Participant from Palestine** highlighted the fact that during the UNAW session, the role of multinational corporations in perpetuating violence was rooted in corruption and greed. Thus, more action needs to be taken to confront these multinationals directly rather than only targeting the government.

## Response

**Professor Lilia Solano, Colombia** began with the concept that people in different countries identify with the struggle of Colombia and hence join the effort of renewing Colombia. The churches must join the struggle instead of avoiding involvement. In addition, churches must learn from past struggles in order to formulate the optimal method for progress.

**Bishop Juan Cordona Gomez, Colombia** sought to demystify the conflict in Colombia as an ethnic war and articulated the problem as one concerning social injustice that is caused by the partnering of the state and large multinationals against the poor and vulnerable.

## Round II

**A Participant from Colombia** re-affirmed that a military solution is not the only possible solution to the conflict in Colombia. One tool to orchestrate change could be a humanitarian agreement that would address the intensity of the conflict.

**A Participant from Canada** wondered if the upcoming election in Colombia was a useful opportunity or if there was a sense that the same events would continue to occur.

## Response

**Rev. Jario Suarez, Colombia** replied that there is a strategy set in place so that the government in power can perpetuate its present position. The majority of Colombians would not want to re-elect the current government officials. However, unemployment and other policies create intentional poverty. For example, in March palliative measures for poverty were taken to provide clothing to the poor in efforts to secure their votes. This gesture of government support was promoted in order to depict the Colombian government in a good light.

Churches are equipped to provide visibility to the constant systematic violations of human rights. Unveiling violation of human rights would show the true face of the Uribe Administration of Colombia.

**Bishop Juan Cordona Gomez, Colombia** voiced his understanding that beyond the present government's power, the structure itself needs to be dismantled. He further explained that the next government could follow the same lead; therefore there must be a united front against social injustice in the structure.

## Colombia Session II: Concrete Actions for Advocacy

---

**Goal:** The second session sought to introduce advocacy imperatives in relation to Colombia, answering the question, **what will be our focus on this advocacy?** The panel consists of three persons evaluating and

synthesizing the four presentations in the previous session in order to propose common and concrete actions of advocacy.

---

***Moderator***

**Ms. Noemi Espinoza**

Vice Moderator of the CCIA-WCC and  
President of Theology Community of Honduras

***Assistant Moderator***

**Ms. Jessica Hawkinson**

Associate for International Affairs and  
Education Presbyterian United Nations Office

---

**Professor Jenny Neme-Neiva**

Director, Centro Cristiano para Justicia, Paz y Accion Noviolenta- JUSTAPAZ

---

**Professor Neme-Neiva** began with a reflection on advocacy lessons learned with respect to the process carried out in Colombia. She stated that there are numerous churches in Colombia yet they miss pivotal opportunities for advocacy. Public advocacy is many times associated solely with political influence on the actions and mechanics of transformation. Although political advocacy focuses on processes related to public policy, advocacy must be extended to impact other arenas.



The starting point for advocacy should be at home, in the local decision making bodies of churches, and at the grassroots level. The political will of the churches' role was defined under the Peace Commission created in 1995. It transformed the concept of the impact churches have in political advocacy. The Peace Commission was a successful advocacy reaped by planting seeds at the local level.

Many in Colombia have come to repent and accept Jesus, justice and peace, but are isolated from the reality of the conflict. The indifference of the spiritual leadership towards action and conception has led to this separation. Many churches in Colombia claim to have a biblical calling, since God's word is a message for peace. There must be a commitment to peace as gospel-inspired work.

**Action Plans:**

1. The Church can lead awareness-training programs to educate the affected population about governmental policies and their influence on daily life. Often, the public is isolated from the knowledge that the government is promoting particular policies. A clear vocational duty of the churches as educators in this vein would be essential, and should include the mandate for peace in efforts to keep ministries in sync with this obligation.
2. Another angle to take is the strengthening of the ability of churches to bring peace through vigils and journeys of prayer. For example on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September, the UN Day of Peace inspired and empowered individuals to continue with ongoing security in conflict regions. An initiative entitled "Bread for Peace" acknowledged and accepted the concept that peace requires food security.
3. Opportunities to make arrangements for local government involvement should be sought out. An increased presence of the voices of those suffering directly from human rights violations should be incorporated.

Legal action has been effective in ensuring compliance with human rights in the past. Members from other churches outside of Colombia should go and witness the atrocities first-hand. This would allow such visitors to return home with a personal account of what has been happening in Colombia and submit reports to their governments and local churches, in addition to the church members from Colombia that offer public witness.

Professor Neme-Nevia closed with a testimony of a time when valuable information was stolen from her office. Items stolen included hard drives detailing the history of the organization and documentation of victims in Colombia. After consulting with the victims of the theft, it was decided that “a lot of noise must be made.”. As a result, various countries supported the outcry against this violation and these victims stories came to the national government accompanied by a declaration of support from 30 UN officials.

### **Mr. Joseph Donnelly**

Caritas Internationalis Permanent Representative to the United Nations

---

The flag of Colombia flies each day next to the 191 flags in front of the UN headquarters in New York. Mr. Donnelly posed some questions for thought: “how do we show this flag? Where do we hear about this significant country with exceptional internal human resources caught in quite extraordinary struggles for life?”

There was and remains a sense that the issues of Colombia are underrepresented in the international community. In efforts to mobilize a strategy for advocacy on behalf of Colombia, in 2004 a group of about 14 people gathered from 12 different faith based organizations at the Church Center for the United Nations (CCUN). This was spearheaded by the Presbyterian UN Office. This “non-action regarding Colombia was locked into the previous status-quo” based on the idea that the US had no interest in these areas of advocacy.



The outcomes of this alliance of religious NGO's addressed the following:

1. Tapping into all advocacy resources on various levels.
2. Dispelling myths surrounding Colombia.
3. Giving a voice to the victims.
4. Acknowledging Colombia's IDP population, which is the second largest worldwide.

Furthermore these concerns needed to be brought to light and communicated to all the member states of the UN, which would likely have greater influence in the General Assembly and Security Council decision making.

3.5 million people are internally displaced in the nation of Colombia. Land rights, and the loss of life are issues that cannot be ignored; therefore, there must be a steadfast presence at the UN. There are thousands of accredited NGOs, opportunities within these organizations must be identified and seized. Despite the engagement on the rights of vulnerable Colombians by many organizations, churches, faith based communities, and even some UN agencies, “somehow it is still not on the agenda.” Connections must still be made everywhere because “Colombia does not exist in isolation.”

To defray the misbelief that the war in Colombia is as an issue of internal sovereignty versus a human rights issue, the church must speak and say “here is our chart of accounts which can hold us as well as others accountable.” Although there are distinctions between universal human rights and internal sovereignty, the two domains cannot be “mutually exclusive.” “The nuanced situation in Colombia cannot be separated from issues of land, human rights, justice, social, economic and political issues.”

While Northern Uganda was enduring one of the most dire child victim’s crises, organizations in New York and at the UN had yet to focus on this tragedy. Although it developed slowly, there is a focus now in place due to the diligent efforts of a group of Ugandan advocates. This group came to the UN and initiated a call for action by describing their losses at the hands of the crisis in Uganda. Although many of the individuals suffered severe losses “most notably their own children,” they refused to accept such a life. As a result of this advocacy, progress has been made in the form of resolutions and a mandate to the Secretary General to appoint a Special Envoy. With the supporting member states, the Security Council engaged in dialogue with Ugandan leadership which led to 80 percent of the 1.6 million IDP’s returning home.

With respect to Colombia, a consistent forwarded update must be made available and distributed to officials at the UN. Although the struggle for peace in Colombia may be lengthy and complex “we must stay steadfast, professional, pastoral and visible.”

**Mr. Gonzalo Vargas Llosa**

Senior Policy Advisor, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

---



Mr. Llosa Photo: M.Beach

The following story illustrated tale of inspiration Mr. Llosa offered an inspiring story of displaced Colombian refugees:

The night before arrival, the Panamanian police had rounded up by force some 200 Colombians and had taken them by helicopter to Colombia. Mr. Llosa was taken by a church, the only allies at the time, to speak with the remaining people of that group who sought refuge in the church. The accusation was that these Colombians were associated with military rebels. A small nun was facing the agitated police and told them “I don’t care who sent you, but here, God is in charge.” As a result of this nun’s courageous stand UNHCR and the church managed to bring back some of the refugees to Panama.

Panama held a “negative attitude” toward Colombian refugees that stemmed from a historical and economic background. Mr. Llosa mandate was to open a UN office in Panama as a representative from UNHCR working in a partnership with churches and NGO. This collaborative effort produced some improved policies toward Colombian Refugees and asylum-seekers. The Panamanian government had never wanted to be home to a UN office because of the UN’s contrasting position on refugees. For example the Panamanian government had refused to give refugee status to Panamanians living in the jungle; status remained one of temporary humanitarian protection.

In Colombia, internally displaced persons (IDPs) groups have lost land, the unemployment rate has risen, and among the working class, the average earning is less than non-IDPs in Colombia. In addition, there has been a disconnect between the laws that ostensibly offer protection to the IDPs and what has been put into practice. There are over 3 million IDP in Colombia. The indigenous groups, Afro-Colombians and rural-dwellers are most

affected by forced displacement. Although the government and IDPs need external aid in tandem with public exposure, the Colombian government attempts to keep this issue invisible.

Other groups of Colombians residing in neighboring countries often go unrecognized. Only a small percentage of peoples have been identified as refugees; these few are protected from repatriations and benefit from a refugee status.

## Interactive Dialogue

---

**A Participant from Colombia** warned of the dangers involved in helping Colombians. When trying to help, it is important to protect one another. One option is to seek refuge in the spiritual protection of the World Council of Churches as we work towards peace together.

**A Participant from United States** pointed out that Mark Johnson from FOR (Fellowship Of Reconciliation) has two fact sheets on how to bring about legislative action peacefully. One is entitled "Fact sheet on US Bases in Colombia" and the second titled "US Military Bases in Colombia," both of which could be useful.

Is there any remotely safe method for people to protest in the face of a military based agreement?

**A Participant from Dominican Republic** was inspired upon hearing the story of Colombia told prominently. It provided hope so that one day the same can be done for the untold stories of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

**A Participant from Fiji** noticed that there was only passing reference to violence against women in all the presentations. Is there any documentation of these atrocities, are there agencies addressing violence against women and the use of violence against women as a weapon of war?

**A Participant from United States** emphasized that many of us misunderstand the story of Jesus. If it is possible to get the true story of Jesus out, people can begin to understand more clearly what is going on in the states today. The crucifixion is an illustration of what happens to people of peace. States are crucifying members of peaceful movements even in the present-day. Often churches inadvertently stand in the way of justice because their misunderstanding of the story of the crucifixion of Jesus.

## Response

**Professor Jenny Neme-Neiva, Colombia** asserted that there are ways to protest peacefully, citing her church protest in front of a military base. There Ms. Neme-Neiva's church held a vigil, providing an example of the importance of non-violence in the form of a peaceful protest. Connections such as these must be made to encourage and seize other opportunities. Change is slow but activists should not be discouraged.

**Mr. Joseph Donnelly** revealed that many people have been strong enough to stand up and bear witness to the truth. Some of these stories were heard in the sessions on Colombia. There must be an outcome from such discussions to counter the stagnant progress. Although Colombia is not given a voice in many places, the International Criminal Court ICC has held the conflict in Colombia on the agenda.



---

## ***IV. Engaging as One: Ecumenical Advocacy in Action***

---

Engaging in the techniques of direct advocacy was essential to UNAW 2009. This was carried out before and during UNAW. Internet resources and the introductory UN 101 session before UNAW increased participants' understanding of the UN framework and the "how to's" of advocacy at the UN. Two sessions on Mission Visit Preparations provided opportunities for participants to develop advocacy points about the rights of Climate Displaced People. Material included also prepared participants for the upcoming Mission Visits by examining protocols used when engaging with diplomats at the UN. During the week, the WCC UN Reception, "Mission Visits" meeting representatives of the UN member states, and Regional Caucus sessions were all critical opportunities to strategize and engage in advocacy.

### *Organizers:*

Mr. Dennis Frado (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Lutheran World Federation)

Dr. Guillermo Kerber (WCC), Ms. Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee WCC), & Ms. Faautu Talapusi (WCC)

Wednesday  
November 18, 2009

---

### **Ecumenical Advocacy in Action I: WCC UNAW High Level Reception**

---

The WCC UNAW High-Level Reception took place at the Church Center for the UN. It was an opportunity for direct advocacy with over 27 Ambassadors, representatives of Permanent Missions and UN agencies who accepted the invitation to attend. The reception offered a venue for UNAW participants to raise the churches' voices on the UNAW 2009 themes of climate displaced peoples, indigenous peoples' rights and the situation in Colombia. Ms. Lois Dauway officially welcomed the UN diplomatic community to the faith-based space, expressing the important partnership between the UN community and people of faith.

Tuesday  
17 November 2009

---

### **Ecumenical Advocacy in Action II: Mission Visit Preparatory Work**

---

**Goal:** While the United Nations and international community sought to counter climate change through negotiations, little action was being taken to protect the rights of those immediately being displaced by climate change. As the UN prepared for Copenhagen, people in the Pacific were forced to evacuate entire islands because of the rise in sea levels. Given the urgent need for just solutions and the attention of the international community to climate change, UNAW 2009's common ecumenical advocacy focus was to lift up the churches' continued call for a fair, ambitious and binding agreement on the rights of climate displaced peoples. The goal was to raise the voices of the churches to members of the United Nations so that the international community could respond to this urgent crisis. There were three parts to the Mission visit: Mission visit preparation, the Mission visit itself, and Mission visit reports.

---

**Moderator**  
**Dr. Guillermo Kerber**  
Programme Executive, Climate Change and Water  
World Council of Churches

---

“A call to mission is not to visit friends or enemies. It is for our cry to be heard,” echoed Dr. Kerber, as he convened the Mission Visit Preparation session. Meeting with Missions is a critical time to bring the concerns of the churches on this tragic situation. He outlined two components of each mission visit.

The first component is to raise the concerns and voices of the churches. This begins by highlighting churches voices on the upcoming COP 15 in Copenhagen and churches concerns on Climate Displaced Peoples. Churches are asking for an amendment of the Kyoto Protocol that would go beyond 2012. On December 13, 2009 at 3PM, the ecumenical service held in Cathedral Church in Copenhagen, Denmark, would ring their bell 350 times to remember the 350 people gathered in Copenhagen. The global average temperature should not go below 2°C degrees south. We are asking for 2°C degrees south and that temperatures be reduced by 40 percent by 2020. To do this, the responsibilities of industrialized countries toward climate change needs to be recognized while the consequences are mostly suffered by the less developed communities. The historical responsibility expressed in the Kyoto protocol, Dr. Kerber noted, should be part of the deal.

Mission Visits should then move into conveying the churches concerns of CDPs. Delegates should share the shocking realities and stories learned this week that climate displaced peoples face. The purpose is to bring the witness of the churches before the Missions. Internationally, there have been consultations around the issue of Climate Displaced Peoples have taken place, but there is no consensus on how to move forward. The question remains: should there be a new convention to address the particular situation of climate change displacement or should the concept of refugees and migrants be expanded to include those displaced by climate change? The international community must move beyond semantics and move into action, because islands are being submerged in the worlds’ oceans. “We are asking for the political will to urgently resolve and find solutions to the needs and rights of CDPs,” said he.

Climate displacement raises further issues of national sovereignty. What happens to the sovereignty of states once they are covered by the sea? What happens to the cultural identity of peoples moved to different countries? He noted that these inquiries fundamentally question the human rights of climate displaced peoples. Churches want the human, cultural and political rights of those displaced to be protected in all circumstances.

The second part of the visit should focus on the following questions to the countries:

- What have governments done in relation to CDPs?
- What are the expectations in relation to the conference?
- What is the position of the different missions?
- What is the role of the different missions?
- What is the message the mission wants us to bring back?

**Mr. Dennis Frado**  
Director, Lutheran Office for World Community

---

---

Mr. Dennis Frado prepared UNAW participants in the procedures and etiquette around Mission Visits, and how UNAW visits should be conducted. Visits are not places for one person alone to dominate the meeting. Rather, Mission Visits are venues for many members of the delegation to raise key concerns and present questions.

Before the meeting, Mr. Frado encouraged the following:

- Finalize Talking Points so that the requests (also known as “asks”) are clear and organized.
- Decide who will introduce the group to the Ambassador or other Mission officials.
- Decide who will make each point in your Talking Points; spread these around – ideally one per person – so everyone gets a chance to speak.
- Decide upon a note taker.
- Bring business cards with you to give to the Ambassador.
- Arrive five minutes ahead of your appointment to catch your breath and cross-check who will be speaking about what topic.

During the meeting,

- Address an Ambassador as Your Excellency. Others can be Mr. or Ms.
- Introduce the members of the group or ask each one to introduce himself or herself, limiting the introductions to name, organization and country of origin.
- The designated leader should thank the Mission official for his/her time and mention the general topic. Inquire as to the amount of time they have available so you can assess how long to spend on each point.
- Have each person hand over a calling card if available. Ask for a calling card from the official -- ideally one card for each person in your group. If the official doesn't have enough cards, be sure to share the information with your colleagues after the visit.
- Speak slowly and confidently; always be polite and friendly.
- Usually it is best to make all of the points and then allow time for the Mission official to respond. However, they sometimes will want to comment on each point. Try to avoid this if possible because lengthy responses can result in you not making all of your points.
- Illustrate a point from your own experience or share one of the stories of CDPs as presented during the meeting. This is usually more effective than speaking more generally. Mission officials tend to deal with broad ideas and so having a more concrete example makes the point more lucid.
- Try to avoid interruptions, but don't hesitate if it seems that the Mission official or a member of your group wants to make a long speech. It is important that each member of the group be heard.
- Try to avoid arguments, even when you find the official's position is the opposite of the group's. Instead, listen to their response and move on to the next point.
- Ask the official whom the group could follow up with in their capital. This is especially important if you are visiting the Mission of your own country.
- If you have Talking Points or specific recommendations to leave with the Mission official, hand these over at the end, not during the discussion as they could be a distraction when a member of the group is speaking. An official may be tempted to read the points and not listen attentively to whoever is speaking.
- Close by thanking the official again for their time.

Thursday

## **Ecumenical Advocacy in Action III: *Mission Visits***

---

### **Ecumenical Advocacy as One on Climate Displaced Peoples Mission Visit Worship: Thursday**

*[A note from the Chaplain's journal]*

*Eastern, Greek, Ethiopian and Armenian Orthodox traditions were brought together in this deeply reverent and beautiful service led by four women of each tradition. Orthodox prayers, chants, incense, and candlelight was enhanced by the preaching of Rev. Chris Ferguson on the importance of political advocacy in the here and now.*

Thursday  
November 19, 2009

### ***Mission Visits: Meeting State Representatives***

---

Through strategic analysis, 62 countries, four intergovernmental organizations, and the UN General Assembly were contacted to meet and engage with UNAW delegations on climate change and climate displaced peoples. The countries represented key players of Annex I, Annex II, and developing countries that are directly affected by climate displacement. The 62 countries were Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, France, French Polynesia (represented at the UN through France), Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Caledonia (represented at the UN through France), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niue (through New Zealand at the UN), Norway, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Commonwealth of Dominica, Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Cook Islands (through New Zealand at the UN), Czech Republic, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Dominican Republic, Independent State of Samoa, Kingdom of Tonga, People's Republic of Bangladesh, People's Republic of China, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Republic of Guyana, Republic of Hungary, Republic of Indonesia, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Korea, Republic of Madagascar, Republic of Maldives, Republic of Marshall Islands, Republic of Mauritius, Republic of South Africa, Republic of Suriname, Republic of Fiji Islands, Republic of Philippines, Republic of Poland, Republic of Sudan, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of Vanuatu, Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and Tuvalu. The four intergovernmental organizations contacted were Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), European Union (EU), Group of 77 at the United Nations, and the Non Alignment Movement.

After numerous follow-up requests, of those 67 inquiries, 15 accepted invitations to meet with UNAW delegates: **Belize, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cuba, Guatemala, Grenada and AOSIS, Hungary, India, Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Nicaragua, New Zealand, Philippines, Poland, and Samoa.** As Grenada holds the chair of AOSIS, the meeting was merged to one for both Grenada and AOSIS. Most entities were unable to confirm due to conflicts in schedule or travel of the permanent representatives, while a number had to cancel last minute due to ad hoc sessions at the United Nations. All meetings were held either at the Permanent Mission or at the United Nations.

The size of each advocacy delegation varied on the space allowed by the respective Mission. Delegations were arranged so that there would be the maximum regional, gender and confessional diversity within each delegation. Each delegation had a designated leader and an expert on climate change. Delegations met prior to the scheduled meetings to distribute Talking Points and determine tasks. Each advocacy delegation carried forward the same advocacy message of the churches' call to action around climate change and climate displaced peoples. Mission Visits took place on Thursday morning into the afternoon. UNAW participants reconvened as a group at WCC in order to discuss the visits.

The following summary combines oral and written reports following the Mission Visits.

### **Permanent Mission of Belize to the United Nations**

The delegation met with the Deputy Permanent Representative H. E. Ms. Janine Coye Felson. Ambassador Felson noted that Belize's position on COP 15 was almost identical to that of the WCC. The government has been active in sensitizing its population to climate change. Belize is chiefly concerned about renewable energy production since an enormous proportion of GDP is used for importing oil. The Ambassador urged for a focus on attracting foreign investors into renewable technology development in the region. Furthermore, Belize commits a staggering 84 percent of its GDP to debt servicing. She stressed that this was the most pressing issue when considering the targets for adaptation funding. The Ambassador noted that while there is a coordinated regional response to climate change, they do not have a position on CDPs. She noted that this required legal and strategic planning.

### **Permanent Mission of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations**

The H.E. Mr. Pablo Solón-Romero, Permanent Representative to the United Nations received the UNAW delegation. Ambassador Solón-Romero spoke of initiatives at the UN to promote a declaration for harmony with Mother Earth, the world is at a moment when the earth is about to be broken. With regard to COP 15, the Ambassador noted that the Kyoto Protocol needed to be maintained and reaffirmed; at the same time, developing countries needed to improve the quality of life for their citizens. This has implications for producing more greenhouse gases (GHG). The larger and more developed countries need to make efforts to reabsorb gases so that the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) can develop. The structural causes within the system produce the effects we face. He noted that churches could play an important role because leaders of nations become concerned when the churches speak. Ambassador Solón-Romero noted his willingness to talk to other embassies about this.

### **Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations**

The group met with Ambassador Pedro Nunez Mosquera. The Ambassador recognized the WCC's important role in its advocacy for just causes and respected that the organization was motivated by its Christian faith. He spoke at length about the current political situation in Cuba and touched upon the effects of climate change especially the devastating



Cuban Mission

Photo: C. Ham



effects of hurricanes (this has led to a 20 percent decrease in GDP). He also detailed the achievements of Cuba in education and healthcare. With regards to climate change, the Ambassador stressed that it is unreasonable for developed countries to expect developing countries to set targets. AOSIS is very active and has a strong position. The Ambassador himself has been in conversation with the Ambassador from Tuvalu; both are well aware of the threats facing the small island states. He noted that CDPs, and displaced peoples generally, are very important matters that should be dealt with at General Assembly level through a new treaty. He was emphatic that it should not be decided upon at the Security Council because it would become politicized. He was convinced that a political rather than legally binding outcome at Copenhagen will achieve very little (cf. political commitment around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and how far we are from reaching them). The Ambassador encouraged the WCC itself to continue its fight against the blockade and hold its solidarity with Cuba. He commended delegates to advocate for changes to national and international production and consumption patterns.

### **Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations<sup>15</sup>**

The delegation met with Ms. Jimena Leiva, Third Secretary at the Guatemala Mission. Guatemala has experienced drought. The Ambassador is optimistic and encouraged the WCC to continue its work on climate change and advancing the rights of climate displaced peoples.

### **Permanent Mission of Grenada to the United Nations /AOSIS<sup>16</sup>**

H.E. Dr. Dessima M. Williams, Grenada Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN and the Chairperson of Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), warmly welcomed the UNAW delegation. The Ambassador commended the work of faith-based organizations like the WCC, and encouraged the WCC continue its pursuit for climate change and the rights of climate displaced peoples. As both the representative of Grenada and AOSIS, she noted the urgent need to find solutions for those displaced by climate change. AOSIS and Grenada have been working actively to bring the concerns of small island states to the UN.

### **Permanent Mission of the Republic of Hungary to the United Nations**

The delegation met with the Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative H.E. Mr. Attila Zimonyi. The Ambassador appreciated the regional representation that came to meet with him. He was very supportive of the World Council of Churches' climate change position and efforts, but noted that he did not know enough about the rights of Climate Displaced Peoples. He asked for more information and encouraged the churches to build coalitions and advocate on the cause. With regards to climate change,



With the Hungarian Ambassador

Courtesy of Rev Dr. Hyunju Bae

<sup>15</sup> Incomplete mission visit reports were received.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

Hungary hopes that the EU would take a leadership role to set targets and come away with a 2 percent target and commitment of funds to developing countries. Hungary's Prime Minister will attend Copenhagen, and the Hungarian churches and NGOs have been very involved in the climate change debate. Hungary is 70 percent Roman Catholic and 30 percent Protestant, and churches have been an important interface between the civil society/grassroots and the government. Churches have had a significant role in building the younger generations through schools and universities in order to change how we live.

### **Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations**

The delegation met with Mr. Arindam Bagchi, Counsellor at the Indian Mission to the UN. He stated that like many other countries, India is facing climate change and is seeking to address those concerns. The Indian government is calling for an ambitious outcome from COP 15, but is not optimistic about the outcome. India does not want the Kyoto Protocol to be abandoned. The Ad Hoc working group is important, but more global cooperation is needed. He spoke of India's concern over the protectionism of the Annex I countries, and that what was urgently needed was lifestyle changes. Green technology is being promoted in India, but as India is still a developing country, the country needs energy to develop. In terms of climate displaced peoples, the term "climate displaced peoples" is contested at the United Nations, and member states do not agree in which international mechanisms best can address the concerns.

### **Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations**

H. E. Mr. In-kook Park, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN, met with the delegation. Ambassador Park was well aware of the activities of the Pacific leaders and promised to advance the concerns of the Pacific as Korea currently chairs the United Nations Second Committee (Economic and Financial). He



recognized that climate change and displacement was a significant threat to the world, and also to Asia. If the Himalayan glaciers melt, it would lead to a death of 1.3 billion and have disastrous consequence on food and water. The Korean government has agreed to a 30 percent reduction of its GHGs emissions by 2020 through mitigation and green development. The Ambassador was not optimistic about a legally binding outcome from Copenhagen, especially as the Obama administration does not have a mandate from the US Senate. He stressed that follow-up action must be taken to create a binding agreement.

### **Permanent Mission of the Republic of Madagascar to the United Nations**

The group met with H.E. Mr. Zina Andrianarivelo-Razafy, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Ambassador Andrianarivelo-Razafy indicated that Madagascar is a victim of climate change: severe rainfalls have increased flooding and landslides, and rising sea levels have resulted in land loss in western Madagascar. Madagascar's priority to climate change can be seen by the ministerial delegation they are sending to COP 15. The delegation's position will be that those who have, or continue to pollute the most should pay the most. LDCs, who have not contributed as much as developed countries to GHG emissions, deserve financial compensation for their efforts in adaptation and mitigation. Ambassador Andrianarivelo-

---

Razafy maintained that the churches could be the most effective advocates for the poor because they are “on the ground,” and therefore privy to what the poor are feeling and thinking. The churches have an advantage, because they have much more credibility than the politicians. At the United Nations, there must be a change in the way decisions are made, chiefly with the General Assembly being empowered. The current UN structure perpetuates a constant stalemate, with global agendas not being properly addressed unless certain states are persuaded.

### **Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations**

The delegation met with H.E. Mr. Hamidon Ali, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN. Much in line with the position of the G77, the Ambassador noted that Malaysia had very little expectations from COP 15 and that industrialized countries had obligations to counter climate change. When asked how far Malaysia was taking measures to prevent harm from the people particularly living in coastal areas (i.e. from the rising of the sea or other climate induced changes of the environment), he simply stated that there was no need for prevention. If anything happens, noted the Ambassador, the people of Malaysia are used to supporting each other, and therefore, would come to each other's aid. When asked about how palm oil and the logging of forests impact the climate, the group was met with silence.

### **Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations**

H.E. Mr. Jim McLay, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations who met with the group, stated that a binding agreement is not supposed to be the outcome of COP 15, as it is only one of three meetings – Copenhagen being the first, the COP 16 in Mexico the second and COP 17 in South Africa the third. It was 2012 he was concerned about, and hoped for a convention for 2012 and onward. Those wanting a framework from Copenhagen are being too ambitious, especially as the meeting will only produce a political declaration. While New Zealand is willing to commit to a politically binding outcome, there is little reason to do so if key players like the United States, India and China, who produce 70 percent of the world GHGs are not doing so. Ambassador McLay noted that as reducing GHGs is correlated with reducing agricultural output, GHGs would be difficult to reduce when hunger is seen as a more important issue than the environment. New Zealand formed the Global Alliance to research how to reduce greenhouse gases while increasing agricultural production. Regarding CDPs, he stated that the main concern is preventing the displacement of small island states. The issue is frightening for both populations at risk of being displaced and for populations that will be forced to absorb them. The Ambassador noted that New Zealand's priority is to prevent refugees and not on how to take them in. CDPs is an issue that should be addressed by the UN Security Council and not the UN Human Rights Council.

### **Permanent Mission of Nicaragua to the United Nations**

The delegation met with H. E. Ms. Maria Rubiales de Chamorro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations. The ambassador affirmed the ongoing work of the WCC and those at the CCUN. Former President of the United Nations General Assembly Father H. E. Miguel d'Escoto will be the head of their national delegation to COP 15. Nicaragua affirms the Kyoto Protocol and is against a new treaty. It seeks to strengthen the G77, the largest intergovernmental organization of

---

developing states in the UN where countries of the Global South can articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the UN system and promote South-South cooperation for development. The ambassador highlighted the resolution being proposed at the General Assembly on “Harmony with Mother Earth” that would emphasize the ethical principles and values for living in harmony with Mother Earth. This resolution would be first step in developing a “Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth” that would complement the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. She requested that the WCC and other NGOs advocate for this resolution and process. Unfortunately certain governments like the United States are adverse to the resolution because they oppose the term “Mother Earth” for ideological reasons.

### **Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations**

The delegation met with H. E. Mr. Leslie B. Gatan, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, and Mr. Jimmy Blas, Second Secretary, Second Committee - Economic and Humanitarian. The Philippines recognize the empirical evidence around climate change and seeks an agreement to come out of COP 15. One of the biggest problems is that the developed countries are forcing the developing countries to lower their emissions on a mandatory basis. Many developing countries engaged in drilling and oil production would be left desperately poor if they had to meet this requirement. Meanwhile, cutting down drilling has less impact on developed countries. The United States, Canada and New Zealand argue for reduction of carbon emissions if the big developing countries reduce theirs, but even if all emissions from developing countries were lowered, that would only take care of 20 percent of total emission. While the rest of the developed world is committed to Copenhagen, only the United States is not. If there is no deal from the Copenhagen meeting, developing countries will do their own thing; however, it would be better to have a synchronized effort.

The government has been working to lower greenhouse gas emissions, and has asked investors to determine how they might allocate resources in other forms of renewable energy resources, such as solar and wind. A “blame game” continues in the trenches of the United Nations, where developed countries are waiting for each other’s commitment and the developing countries are caught in the middle. Groups such as the WCC, are important in exerting pressure to advance climate justice.

The WCC could have some leverage with Congress by putting pressure on it to support an agreement similar to the Kyoto Protocol. When asked about the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) program, they replied that it was a market-driven, developed country approach, and that the Philippines was not a major player. Ecuador has a very good program with regard to avoiding the exploitation of resources; oil reserves are located in the areas where indigenous populations reside and the government chooses not to tap into those reserves. Instead they are working toward a bi-lateral, mutually-beneficial arrangement so that the indigenous people are not exploited. With regard to mining and deforestation in the Philippines, Mr. Gatan indicated there are efforts afoot to address the impact of large mining organizations. The Philippine government is protecting the 20 percent of forestation that is left. Several mines have been closed because of the chemicals dumped into the rivers. In the Philippines there are strict codes against this.

With regards to CDPs, the Philippines is the lead spokesperson of the G-77 and is united in advancing the concerns of marginalized communities on issues related to climate change. Protection for people adversely affected by climate change is on the table.

## **Permanent Mission of the Independent State of Samoa to the United Nations**

The delegation met with H.E. Mr. Ali'ioaiga Feturi Elisaia, Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations. Samoa seeks to increase its voice economically, globally, socially and culturally. Its immediate alliance is with small islands and developing states. Climate change has been a key priority as the rise in sea levels has been affecting many of the country's low land coastal islands. Many in the international arena speak of climate change as a future threat, but climate change is an immediate threat to those in countries like Tuvalu and Kiribati. This has strengthened the collaboration between small island states and the work of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The ambassador is concerned that Copenhagen will not bring forth a binding agreement, with many focused on the US position. He does not subscribe to the view that governments should not go because Obama is not going. He noted that civil society advocacy around climate change are not often heard by governments. The tsunami that hit Samoa on September 29 killed 120, 60 of them children, and devastated the local tourist industry. Funds are needed for the rebuilding process. Samoa has been receiving support from the international community, and Australia and New Zealand have provided key assistance. Many international intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations such as Caritas Internationalis have helped build 530 shelters inland. Australia has supported local projects to counter the effects of climate change – sea walls have been built around the coast of most of the islands. Renewable solar energy projects are also in place, but more adaptation efforts need to be taken to adjust to climate change. Samoa's constitution recognizes Samoa as a Christian state and the churches have a prominent role in Samoa – for instance three-quarters of the education is provided by churches. The ambassador emphasized that churches should be advocating around climate change and continuing their active role in the political process.

## ***V. Setting Common Strategic Global Ecumenical Advocacy***

---

Tuesday, Thursday & Friday  
17, 19 & 20 November 2009

### ***A. Regional Caucuses – Working Together as One and Taking Our Work Home***

---

Session Organizers: Rev. Christopher Ferguson & Ms. Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee (World Council of Churches)

**Goal:** The week incorporated key times for regional and inter-regional integration, analysis and advocacy as they relate to the three thematic priorities. Regional Caucuses and Thematic Breakout sessions were structured to provide opportunities for UNAW participants to meet within their own regions to discuss critical challenges faced within their regions. Discussions included making delegates aware of critical concerns of other regions. Delegates began strategizing concrete steps for post UNAW follow-up advocacy.

Two Regional Caucus Sessions took place, with a Thematic Breakout session in between.

Regional Caucuses were asked to make regional connections with and contextualize the three thematic areas: Climate Displaced Peoples, Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Colombia. They were to determine actions and follow up to be taken by their caucuses, respective churches and organizations, and countries.



The Thematic Breakout Session provided the opportunity to strategize how UNAW could enhance a global ecumenical effort around each of the three themes. The strategies formed during this session were fed back into the Regional Caucus meetings to be discussed, contextualized and put into action.

These analyses were presented to the larger UNAW delegations Friday morning during the Regional Caucus and Thematic Breakout Reporting Back session. During the session, UNAW participants agreed to engage in greater advocacy in response to the critical issues raised throughout the week. This process, participants agreed, would entail specific follow-up actions for each regional group to pursue. UNAW participants agreed that follow-up work would continue with the production of the UNAW report. Participants would utilize the report to determine next steps for ecumenical advocacy on a local and regional level.

Below you will find the summation of presentations offered by each Regional Caucus throughout the week.

## Africa

---

The Africa Caucus was comprised of the following countries: Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

For the issue of **Climate Displaced Peoples**, the group noted that Africa faces displacement due to deforestation, erosion, climate change that have led to changes of seasons, flooding, food insecurity and hunger. Climate injustice has been exacerbated by the lack of technology, perniciousness of existing diseases and inadequate health care resources.

Climate change has most affected indigenous peoples. Indigenous people were historically able to harmonize their lives with the climate, but climate change has hampered their ability to do this effectively. Malaria and other water-borne diseases are on the rise. Strong winds that have resulted in land erosion and the exploitation of minerals add another element to the subsequent devastation of natural resources in this region. The lives of indigenous peoples depend on nature, and in protecting nature the indigenous people are protected also. There must be suitable methods of adaptation in each country that incorporate indigenous communities' knowledge of adaptation. Modern technology must partner with traditional practices customs to ensure climate justice.

The WCC should implement the following: educate the communities on the climate changes and integrate the issue of climate change into the education system.

Regarding **Indigenous Peoples' Rights**, the word "indigenous" is problematic in Africa. Recognition, or a lack thereof, of indigenous groups affects land rights, access to natural resources, education, healthcare, political life and decision making. Many indigenous peoples in Africa have been forcefully displaced from their lands.

UNDRIP must be adopted and implemented in Africa. The Caucus expressed a need for support in ensuring the integrity of indigenous peoples and help in facilitating indigenous peoples' access to education, health, and social life. The group also expressed the need for opportunities for indigenous peoples to speak for themselves. One participant from Africa noted, "We don't need people to work for us, but to strengthen our capacity to express our own problems."

The WCC should advocate for adoption and implementation of UNDRIP and to create space for the indigenous peoples' voices to be heard.

With regard to **Colombia**, few Africans know what is taking place in Colombia, especially as there is a lack of sufficient information on the atrocities in Colombia. The causes of Colombian conflict resemble those of the African conflicts. They recognized the challenges faced by the divergent view Colombian churches have in tackling the existing conflicts in their country.

The Caucus suggested the following solutions.

Newspapers have proven to be insufficient for conveying information throughout the global ecumenical network. The global community can act by strengthening the exchange of information and testimonies to the ecumenical networks and the diplomatic missions. They encouraged the reconciliation of the churches in Colombia in hopes that the churches will unify and speak with one voice. Colombians can be invited to other continents to share their testimonies. Christians around the world can be in solidarity through the prayer, and reinforce the plea through media and other communications such as Facebook or a Yahoo group. They can have common advocacy to speak with governments on the peace initiatives in Colombia.

## Asia

---

The Asia Caucus included the following countries: Australia, India, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea and West Papua, Indonesia.

The group discussed in general how the state should be engaged to bring changes and what kind of framework exists for advocacy.

In terms of **Climate Displaced Peoples**, the region noted situations of displacement affecting their region. The Mchchg in Orissa, India are being displaced due to land seizures. The indigenous communities in West Papua, Indonesia were being exploited and the ecological disasters such as the impact of typhoons have resulted in the deforestation of mountains in the Philippines.

With regards to **Indigenous Peoples' Rights**, indigenous communities were being exploited and violated in many parts of their region. The exploitation and sufferings of the indigenous peoples in West Papua, Indonesia, the indigenous peoples struggle for their identity in Australia, and the displacement of Tribals and Dalits because of mining companies in places like Orissa, India, are just some examples of the threats towards Indigenous Peoples in Asia.

With regard to **Colombia**, the caucus noted that "there is a little of Colombia in most of our countries."

The Asia Caucus noted the urgency to develop a theory of human rights advocacy that provides the theological grounding for why the churches work for human rights. They encouraged for the production of a statement highlighting why churches work for human rights.

The Asia Caucus noted that churches and the WCC must engage the state for transformation. The churches should work towards a policy with a shift in focus from event-based advocacy to a sustainable and processed-based advocacy with responsible group formation.

The group proposed the formation of an Asia Caucus, with two to three issues taken up for the next two to three years. For instance, churches could engage in advocacy through an Asian regional ecumenical platform working for the rights of those in West Papua, the Dalits, and the mining situation. This group could be an asset for providing human resources to various church and WCC initiatives on human rights. Interventions must also

be made to equip the churches to face the challenges. The group proposed an increase in sharing of local resources for advocacy and joint efforts in determining how churches could address the issues.

The group noted that the Asian churches, as well as the WCC globally, should encourage member churches to lobby at their national level to spark an awareness of the Colombian issue. Local action should be taken in each country to show their solidarity with Colombia. They proposed that there be an observation of Colombia on the Day of Collective Solidarity Action. They also proposed that churches mobilize letter writing and solidarity petition campaigns through youth groups and congregations to write to the diplomats. Churches need to inform and lobby their leaders on their government's position on Colombia.

The group stressed that the WCC and churches around the world should act as facilitators in providing resources or initiatives to be taken at the global level, must empower churches to take public positions and strengthen the capacity of other churches in their ability to dialogue with governments.

The WCC should continue to provide space for churches to come together and also continue its work in accompanying the churches at times of suffering and struggle, with activities like the "living letters" visits to different continents and countries in promoting solidarity and instilling hope. The global church should engage the churches in the regions affected by climate change and empower climate displaced people by creating venues for their concerns to be voiced.

The WCC should organize a side event at the Human Rights Council on the issue of mining & development projects where various experiences of suffering and struggle would be shared.

The WCC should also raise the concerns of Colombia at the Human Rights Council, monitor the commitments made regarding Colombia and hold the US accountable for its role in Colombia. The Colombia issue should be taken up by the member bodies of WCC, so that it can be owned and driven.

## **The Caribbean & Latin America**

---

The Caribbean and Latin American Caucuses combined to form one caucus, due to the low number of representatives from the Caribbean. They represented the following countries: Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Uruguay.

Regarding **Climate Displaced Peoples**, the group suggested the creation of education and awareness campaigns on CDPs. They noted that the plight of climate displaced peoples needs to be linked to its causes – problematic development, agricultural and economic models, the emphasis on bio-fuels and mining at the risk of damaging the environment. Climate change is not an isolated issue and people worldwide can be victims of the effects of climate change. The group encouraged the creation of sanction mechanisms at national and international levels for states and corporations.

The group noted the need to include **Indigenous Peoples Rights** as well as Afro-descendent rights as themes in their churches' and organizations' programmatic work and agenda. Victims should be allowed to bring their own messages and stories. Churches should particularly support the work of Mingas (i.e. Indigenous working encounters). Churches should respect and advocate alongside indigenous peoples for the protection of their language and land which have been confiscated by mining companies and states. Confiscation of lands by these corporations and states has led to displacement of sacred lands for many indigenous communities. The

Caucus denounced the massacres and killings targeting indigenous populations and call upon the churches to join in solidarity to respond to these grievances.

Linking Colombia and Indigenous Peoples' Rights, churches and the WCC should ask the Colombian government to halt all harassments and threats of violence to neighboring countries such as Ecuador.

Regarding **Colombia**, the group noted that institutions including churches locally and globally, the WCC, and the UNLO, should collaborate to send a single message locally and internationally. They called for a day or week long dedicated campaign of solidarity with Colombia. Churches should use international spaces and instruments when available, such as the UN and the Human Rights Council. Churches should become more aware of and act on their prophetic call. The power of youth and student movements such as the World Student Christian Federation should be involved in the advocacy. The advocacy process should be a commitment of at least two years as the recommendations are complex and may take time. All available information technology, including international media blogs and Facebook, should be used. Nonetheless, social media networks should have one identity with the same advocacy points and logo, and slogans. The advocacy concerns particularly of the 7,000 political prisoners, the need for a humanitarian agreement, and protection of human rights workers should be raised. There is already an existing website that promotes the legitimate work of human rights defenders that can be utilized: [www.colombiade defenders.org](http://www.colombiade defenders.org). The international community can join the same campaign that those in Colombia are working on all year. They emphasized the importance of a negotiated peace, since without a political solution the 60 year war will not be over. They thanked the WCC and UNLO for their work on advancing rights of Colombians.

## Europe

---

The Europe Caucus included representatives from the following countries: Denmark, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

With regards to **Climate Displaced Peoples**, the group noted that there are many migrants and climate refugees in Europe. This has led to conflict over resources and land grabbing. The group stressed the need to declare a Decade for Climate Change and Displaced Peoples to draw attention to people facing displacement. There needs to be greater awareness around climate displaced peoples, as well as the creation of legally binding instruments on climate refugee rights. The group suggested greater dialogue between faith groups on this issue.

**Indigenous Peoples' Rights** are a challenge in Europe. European attitudes toward indigenous culture must be challenged, and European governments should strengthen their support in the rights of indigenous peoples, like the rights of Sammi people in Norway. The caucus recommends while they European institutions advocate for their legislators to advance the rights of the indigenous peoples, churches should not wait for governments to act, but should demonstrate their commitments by changing church policies and attitudes towards indigenous peoples. There must be legislation on land and water protection, and solidarity networks must be created in churches. They proposed for an "Indigenous Sunday"

EU negotiations on **Colombia** are almost over, but the WCC should write a letter to express the human rights concerns in Colombia. The free trade agreement is to be finalized so there needs to be an assessment of the free trade agreement with an invitation from a representative of the people of Colombia.

The group recommended visits be organized in March after the results of Copenhagen to see the effects of COP 15 and to see the effects on people at the local level.

## Latin America

---

[Please refer to the Caribbean & Latin America Caucus as the two Caucuses were combined]

## Middle East

---

The Middle East Caucus included representatives from Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine.

The issues of **CDPs** and **IPRs** are pertinent in the Middle East. Palestinian Arabs have been displaced since 1948. The rising sea levels of the Mediterranean Sea combined with the government's neglect has left the population in Gaza vulnerable to water-born diseases. Alexandria and the Delta Region in Egypt are both in danger of being flooded by rising sea levels, which would lead to countless people being displaced. Climate change also threatens displacement in the coastal plains of Lebanon and Palestine.

The group noted that there are many indigenous peoples in the Middle East – those in Palestine, Western Sahara, Al-Ahwaz, Kurdistan, Armenian, and other minorities.

The group offered that the experience from Palestine could be helpful for the situation in **Colombia**. The WCC has an ecumenical body for Palestine (WCC's Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel – EAPPI) that can be replicated in the Colombian context. They noted that churches should not be afraid to condemn acts as immoral. The statement "Occupation is a symbol against God" has been a powerful slogan of condemning political immorality.

The group suggested that the WCC could make international days of recognition on each of the three themes, utilizing church networks. They recommended that consorted advocacy themes at times of importance should be used to discern advocacy priorities.

## North America

---

The North American Caucus included representatives from Canada and the United States of America.

The concerns around **Climate Displaced Peoples** are challenges faced in North America. The hurricane and the aftermath of Katrina and the destruction of California fires are just some examples of displacement as a result of climate change. The caucus noted that there is denial of the pervasiveness of climate change. Most North Americans learn about disasters through the media coverage. However, the media has failed to connect disasters with climate change and global warming. North Americans tend to tire easily of hearing the problems of others and assume that everyone can "go home" thereby disregarding that there is such a group as "forced migrants." The group noted that greater communication and presenting competing communication on CDPs, IPRs and Colombia would be a means to get the correct information.



The group noted that meager attention is given to **Indigenous Peoples' Rights**. The history of its violation against indigenous peoples is little recognized in the Western Hemisphere. There is often the sense that developed countries do not need to make reparations to indigenous peoples. Churches need to actively denounce the doctrine of discovery in the Western world. Churches must promote a gospel-based society that responds to the needs of each other. Treaties, land, culture and language were decimated by the newcomers. Unfortunately, truth, reconciliation and reparations are pushed aside as unnecessary measures to be taken. Germany paid reparations to Israel, but North America seems not to believe in reparations for the indigenous peoples that have suffered because of North American policy and gain. The Anglican Church of Canada did pay reparations to the indigenous peoples for the sufferings the latter incurred from Anglican boarding schools. The churches need to work with the state on this issue. The group called for repentance and confession where churches and societies are forced to identify. They then must see how they are trained to profit from the apartheid on indigenous peoples. The group questioned why churches, a morally sanctioned organization, would not admit to their own guilt.

The group noted that communication and coverage around **Colombia** in North America was insufficient. The new 10-year lease of US military bases in Colombia were not reported to the public, debated in the US Congress or the Colombian Congress. Churches must play a role in providing this information to the average person in pews for all citizens of the world. The churches should seek professional assistance with lobbying and developing other strategies. The group suggested that a video contest using Youtube could be a means to creating a documentary film. Many possible actions can be taken in North America. Colombia focused street theatres could be performed in the public square. Observance days of prayer and advocacy can be organized with the Colombian Council of Churches. Abusive corporations can be taken to court. Information counteracting the Colombian government misinformation can be spread. Cut flowers can be used to show how Colombian worker are exploited. The WSCF can use Colombia as an example of the need to reduce violence. There could be a Global Day where churches around the world focus specifically on conducting advocacy at Colombian embassies. The churches should utilize and distribute documentation produced by organizations such as FOR, AFSC and Justiciapaz. These materials will raise awareness and engage regional and national advocacy. They could lobby for city council resolutions on government funds for drug addiction, use images that show the diversity of violence as shown on PBC, provide safe space for Colombian immigrants, highlight how we benefit from economic apartheid. Churches must be more active in educating the person in the pew on identifying the exploitation of Colombia as one's own.

## **Pacific Islands**

---

The Pacific Caucus included representatives from Fiji, Kiribati and Tahiti.

The Pacific Caucus noted the importance of utilizing responses to climate change through channels such as **Reduction in Emission from Deforestation & Degradation (REDD)**. The reduction in emissions and deforestation was critical for those in the Pacific and especially for the discussions that would take place in Copenhagen. However, the opportunity was missed to include the security of the oceans into REDD as the oceans emit more carbons than all forests together. The group encourages a new facility that seeks to reduce emissions from oceans in addition to REDD.

The group highlighted the future threat of resettlement and relocation that has implications on sovereignty, language, tradition and culture. Resettlement also threatens marine resources, fisheries and mineral resources.

---

Displacement of nations due to climate change is a matter of human rights. Will the loss of land mean that they lose their exclusive economic zones, marines, and sea-resources that have still been unexplored? There is uncertainty about what happens to climate displaced peoples in the Pacific and the group would like to have a list of those rights. The group noted that this is an opportunity for AOSIS to act.

Furthermore, to protect peoples from rising sea levels, hurricanes and droughts, programs that address the linkage between resettlement and adaptation, mitigation, and technology transfer, complementing each other need to be provided. Many island dwellers in the Pacific are indigenous peoples' and their rights are enshrined within UNDRIP.

The 2007 Pacific Council of Churches General Assembly, they noted, should be revisited with its membership "to put feet to the strategies defined." Resettlement dialogue needs to begin at home before being brought to the WCC forum. Churches have a role in addressing fears and anxiety about resettlement with continued dialogue within and amongst churches on the issue of resettlement. The group agreed that their church members should lobby governments for the resettlement issue to be discussed immediately.

With regards to **Indigenous Peoples' Rights**, they noted that the right to self-determination is critical and pertinent to the Pacific. These groups include West Papua, Kanaky, Maohi, Australia, Hawaii (Kapae 'Aina), Rapa Nui, and Aotearoa. The Pacific Islands still face decolonization issues that have fallen off the radar of the international community. These issues still must be raised and addressed by the international community. Indigenous land issues are problematic in the Pacific as state acquired land become restricted. Hence, the indigenous peoples were robbed of those lands. For instance, Australia was seized by Britain under terra nullius ("no one's land"); though this was overturned by a decision by the Australian High Court in 1994, Mabo and others v. Queensland. New Zealand violated the Treaty of Waitangi and the exploitation of resources continued.

States and all entities must use the principle of prior and informed consent in all dealings with the indigenous peoples. The recognition of the dignity of persons is missing from the human rights declaration. We celebrate the cosmology by accepting the rights of indigenous people. For the Mahoi church, God is in the land, and we need to identify ourselves with God in the land.

The Pacific strongly affirms the implementation of UNDRIP in all states. They recognize that there is lack of political will and commitment, and this includes indigenous governments. The group recommended that the following actions be taken by churches in their region: raise awareness of UNDRIP within the churches of the Pacific, participate in lobbying governments in signing on and implementing UNDRIP, support the role of Mr. Rex Rumakiek at the UN Decolonization Desk in NY, and reconcile people with their identity and indigenous spirituality by connecting their identity to the land, sea and culture.

The Pacific Caucus expressed solidarity with the churches in **Colombia** and the indigenous peoples' organization and agreed to report the injustices in Colombia at other conferences and in churches in the Pacific. The group agreed to report back to the Pacific Council of Churches and Australia through awareness campaigns, coordination of prayer activities and raising the concerns of Colombia during special days, such as their Human Rights Days.

## B. Closing High Level Keynote Addresses

---

In the challenge to charge forward, the closing high level keynote address offered two perspectives that examined the cultural and theological context rooted in activism. Rev. Dr. Hyunju Bae, a feminist ecumenical theologian and Mr. Paul Divikar, a person of faith and life-long activist, shared their common identification of the imperatives for advocacy, emphasizing the overarching themes of the global triangle “Advocacy, the UN and Ecumenical partnership. This platform also fostered a transitional interaction and send out for delegates participating in GPTR.

**Rev. Dr. Hyunju Bae**  
Professor, Busan Presbyterian University

---

**Rev. Dr. Bae** expressed her great honor to be granted the opportunity to speak at the closing session of UNAW 2009, as well as special thanks to UNLO office and the GPTR committee. Identifying herself as a Korean ecumenical feminist theologian, she and was touched by the presenters and the issues discussed throughout the week. What was especially moving for Dr. Bae were the testimonies and the “sacred space created among delegates through worship in which the pain of Mother Earth was felt.” As activists the engagement cannot be alone, and with the united body of Christ this can be accomplished.



Rev. Bae Photo: M. Beach

A brief history was given of the Church Center to the United Nations (CCUN), as it served as the special venue to which the transformative process of UNAW had taken place. The CCUN shares similar roots to the early Christian movement in the first century, where these household churches represented by women welcomed those in need. The Methodist women followed in these footsteps by offering shelter and hospitality to “leaders of the underrepresented and voiceless”, proving to be a testimony of the embodiment of Christianity.

In the spirit of the UNAW Dr. Bae proposed an invitation to revisit the “space created by the three arms of a triangle” examined by Rev Christopher Ferguson in the opening session. This week reaffirmed that “each arm felt very precious and heavy” consisting of advocacy, ecumenism, and the UN. The work done must not be constricted and therefore needs to take place through multiple levels and methods. The levels include, but are not limited to, global, regional, sub-regional, national and local arenas. From each of these levels the methods of execution should be open to both horizontal partnerships and vertical (up-down and down-up) pathways. The Mission Visits were a “good exercise” of advocacy in action on multiple levels.

Placing emphasis on the WCC call to the “prophetic challenge”, the UNAW is a tool to put this challenge into practice. UNAW does this by standing in solidarity with and giving power to the victim’s voice in an influential arena of institutions like the UN and international organizations. Without such action taking place “the arrogance of the empire would get stronger, and the victimization of the vulnerable would accelerate.”

Furthermore, relationships with the church should continue to produce new generations of advocates. The church needs to be mobilized in its mission. Agreeing with Mr. Kjørven’s keynote address, the view is that the present economic crisis is not due only to the wrong policies, but also has to do with traits like greed and selfishness. As ecumenical Christians,

---

rather than just engaging for peace in the world, the focus should also be placed on reaching out to the 1 billion non-ecumenical Christians. This outreach is termed “inter-mural ecumenism”. One suggestion was to begin with dialogue on the issue of Climate Change. Many non-ecumenical Christians are not involved because they have never been taught the vision of ecumenism.

The church “has the power to serve as a grassroots community.” As an example missionary Christians in Asia reached out to the rural population, instead of persisting on the building of churches they sent fruits to the village. The village was so moved by the generosity that they invited the church to visit the area, thus solidifying the relationship. The transformation of the community is the true miracle of Christianity, not the miracles of healing that tend to be the focus. In order to overcome the reluctance of churches to do advocacy, a biblical and theological resource that examines and provides clarity for the vocation of the church is key.

The Bible can function as the most dangerous book, although faith is the positive power of the Bible. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the same journey is reflected in the crucifixion, a quest to “create an alternative space and culture of life in the empire.” The Lord’s Prayer preaches “thy kingdom come” rather than escapism into post life paradise.

Rev. Dr Bae referred to Acts 2 where the narration of the first church is described as the community of the Holy Spirit. This revealed that the church embodied the following traits, which can be seen as a template for the contemporary ecumenical focus:

- Economic alternative operating on the basis of compassion
- A egalitarian political cultural alternative
- A prophetic community

In order to accomplish this alternative way of life the Seminaries must integrate “transformative theology” into the curriculum. This new course work should include “theology of victims”, which would be rooted in their testimonies and prayers. “Public Theology” similar to what was presented by Ms. Dauway as the “Nike School of theology.” Finally, a “theology of life” and “spirituality of life” composed of ecological sensibility, reclaiming the prophetic imagination, and the restoration of the relationships of humans with each other and their connection to nature. Ms. Anna Maria Gaucho phrased it wisely when she described the transformation of the seminary as becoming “the University of Life.”

To begin to put her Korean background into perspective, Dr. Bae goes back to the resistance of the Koreans against the Japanese. This historically involved many churches, thus setting a context for the mission of the Korean Church. The foundations of the Korean church were in the “tradition of prophetic witness,” and included:

- An independence movement that resisted Japanese imperialism.
- Democratization and human rights.
- Life-fostering which consisted of organic and natural farming.

Currently there is a “trajectory of precious tradition which is no longer cherished” where such practices are not carried on by local churches and presbyteries.

Dr. Bae retells a personal witness to advocacy from Christians and others who acted with conviction on her behalf. In concrete efforts to transform the curriculum at the Busan Presbyterian University, she was fired by the board of trustees near the point of implementation.. They threatened to use a scheme that would bring social disgrace to her name if she continued as a professor at the University. She later learned that the group felt threatened by her assertiveness, and that as the only woman professor she was targeted as the first victim to “domesticate” the staff. After some time she decided to fight back by posting the underlying details of her story on the University’s website, she become a beneficiary of unexpected advocacy by students, family and colleagues. Although not completely recovered from this incident physically and mentally, she was able to bare witness to a victory and was reinstated soon after.

Advocacy is just a tiny storm in a cup, but it is a sign that God in truth demonstrates that God is still alive. It brings comfort; gives energy and courage to victims, and; is a bridge builder for relationships among people. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen. “Let us not be weary.”

Dr. Bae closed with a bible quote “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen(Heb 11:1); Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up”(Gal 6:9).

God bless.

**Mr. Paul Divikar**  
General Secretary, Swadhikar

---

Mr. Divikar opened with the statement that India represents the largest democracy in the world yet practices “hidden apartheid” of the Dahlit community. The multiple human rights violations that occurred historically and are still persistent in today’s society consist of segregation and discrimination in areas of education, housing, employment to social relationships, and go as far as restrictions to behavior in the form of dress codes, the use of civic amenities and violent acts against members of the Dahlit community. Although many of these acts have been documented, the practice of impunity denies the rights of the Dahlits.



Many Dahlits have chosen Christianity as their faith at the community level because of the “power saving grace” offered by the church, and the experience of a transformation of dignity. With the sense of equality in the Christian faith that we are “all made in the image of God”, the oppressed are able to find sanctuary and liberation in the Church, even “in such an entrenched system of hierarchy.” In India the church entity is “identified as the Dahlit Church” with the exceptions of certain Kerala and North East States.

Although the churches have provided sanctuary to the Dahlits, it is limited to the level of the individual, while the perpetual violence and discrimination is not challenged at a community, local or nation level. It was not regarded as the mission of the church, which separates human rights from religious beliefs.

Despite this separation by the church there has been an uprising of international initiatives that expand the mission of the church to include the struggles of the Dahlits. Beyond that the movement has gathered allies including non-Christians, as without secular support, it could be viewed as a challenge to Hinduism. The strategy of a church should coincide with the “different religio-cultural settings of each country and the societies they represent.”

In review of the UNAW three thematic areas (Climate Change, Indigenous Peoples Rights and conflict in Colombia), these varying cultural settings contain “intersections where layers of exclusion get caught in the invisibility of the violations that take place.” In this commonality WCC plays an important role in advocacy.



## C. Closing Plenary

---

### **Moderators**

**Rev. Christopher Ferguson**

WCC Representative to the United Nations

**&**

**Mrs. Arieta Moceica**

Ecumenical Animator-Women & Youth Programm, Pacific Council of Churches

---

### *Moderator*

Mr. Ferguson noted that UNAW is a transformative tool with which the WCC is able to gather members of the church community to build partnership, deepen theological insights, strategize, and develop a common global advocacy platform. This advocacy is prioritized and put into action by strengthening the communication and work at the UN on a national, regional and international level. Mr. Ferguson emphasized that “nothing we do here is valuable unless we take it home.”

### *Discussion Section*

**A Participant from South African** solicited the WCC assistance and support in regions where churches are not interested in advocating for particular issues, regardless of the people that are suffering from it.

**Mr. Ferguson, WCC** affirmed that the focused business of advocacy won't happen unless churches receive qualified documents about these situations in countries where the events are taking place to provide evidence of human rights violations. These should also be shared with the WCC so that legitimate action can be taken.

**A Participant from Palestine** suggested that the necessity is in whom the work is addressed to. All the work done at UNAW will not matter unless the unity created at the conference continues after the conference. If this was understood, the effectiveness of UNAW will be highly dependant on the networking and relationships generated. The work done in our host countries is sure to be enhanced with a global ecumenical network.

**A Participant from Zimbabwe** recommended that the facilitators of the UNAW must ensure that follow up prior to and after the conference is a focus, because of the various actions taking place at different levels all over the world. Many times the advocacy may not be seen, therefore the theme for next year's advocacy week should encourage people to start research early and aggregate the objectives and action plans of other organizations. The discussion should begin before delegates reach New York. This would lead to a more productive outcome for discussion, whether it is adding to what is already being done or taking a new approach. This would be more beneficial than rushing the discussion on the last day. In addition, a 5 minute reflection before the start of each day could assist in a more targeted structure, so that a lively discussion begins early in the week and comes to a crescendo that persists after the conference.

**A Participant from Kenya** took into account that the wealth of information distributed during UNAW provided an opportunity to see how the AACC could take a direct role in creating linkages with the three thematic priorities discussed and the constituencies of each, and incorporating them into the advocacy done by the organization.

**A Participant from Colombia** provided a practical recommendation in which each church represented at UNAW could incorporate in an annual church calendar one Sunday of the month designated to discussing and dedicating a prayer for the victims of landmines, for example. The following Sunday would then rotate to another one of the three thematic themes discussed at UNAW 2009.

It is also important to highlight how concrete the strategy must be in the areas where each individual lives and works. The WCC has consultant status at the UN; therefore member churches must take advantage of this opportunity, and understand how to make better use of WCC relationship with the UN.

Furthermore, contact with local governments should be increased as well as communication amongst churches in conveying what the various governments have done on particular issues.

**A Participant from Jamaica** requested more of a deliberate effort to incorporate the English speaking Caribbean, women and youth into this discussion. Also emphasizing the difficulty of filtrating communication to the grassroots level where the heart of the work should be done. One organization to be included in UNAW is the Girls Brigade which consists of women and youth.

**A Participant from Switzerland** from World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) wants to continue building up the grassroots participation. WSCF is also looking to launch a Climate Justice Campaign in 2010, emerging from their strong involvement in WCC. The WSCF is thankful to the WCC for providing a venue and space for young people who are such an important sector for the future.



**A Participant from Philippines** gave thanks to WCC for giving the youth an opportunity to partake in UNAW 2009 and understanding how significant this participation of youth is in such discussions.

**A Participant from United States** affirmed that the youth movement is looking for partnerships such as the ones created here at UNAW. This can create capacity for on-going work.

**A Participant from Denmark** suggested that we need to have a variety of networks that deal with the problems and connect to the non-church NGOs that have knowledge of the issues discussed. The recommendation is to set up networks specifically under Colombia, Indigenous Peoples Rights and Climate Displaced Peoples establishing a community with a shared responsibility and greater depth.

Another aspect to be addressed is what happens to the issues from the previous year? Will there be any focus or discussion on the international debt issue or trade agreements in the following UNAW?

#### *Response*

**Mr. Ferguson, WCC** explains that when the Caribbean conference of churches was asked to participate a year ago, it was agreed that it has to be a region on in its own terms. The regional partners and staff did excellent work providing names and follow up, yet there was it still low outcome for this year.

In regard to the follow up, remember the triangle focus is on work that already exists. The follow up work from previous UNAW is there because it was given to the ecumenical group. UNAW is meant to discuss the strategizing from the UN angle. WCC asks for help from the networks established for following up on the 2009 UNAW themes in a specific way, for example creating 5-10 specific major actions.

**A Participant from Colombia** recognized that it is now fair to acknowledge that the issue of Colombia is really put on the agenda of the World Council of Churches and underlined that the support was appreciated. Prior to this conference, it was frustrating to see the lack of action and support from churches. When working with each of the churches at the local level, if further information was needed, the participants at UNAW from Colombia are more than willing to offer it.

**A Participant from Democratic Republic of Congo** mentioned that as a representative of the Church of Christ in Congo many thanks are given to the WCC for the invitation, and special thanks to Mr. Ferguson and the Mission Evangelical. The challenge will come in passing the message to those not able to be in attendance for UNAW. Therefore it is greatly encouraged that a network is created to aid in the dissemination of the information discussed here.



Photo: M. Beach

To reaffirm this he quotes Paul's teachings "that the stomach of our labor is a new world." Moreover all the people of the world do not suffer in the same way. This opens up a multitude of creativity designated in the way an individual internalizes the problem and carries it out in their liberation and advocacy.

**A Participant from Indonesia** stated "I came with my own problems; I am now rich with the other problems presented here." The work of the WCC is appreciated and it is urged to continue its efforts. This gathering through UNAW allows participants to not only find something to help move forward their own agenda but also provide a collaborative space where others can benefit from the inclusiveness of UNAW structure and learn from one another's experiences and knowledge to undertake common advocacy.

**A Participant from Lebanon** is involved in advocacy at home. One reality is that many excellent suggestions given "will remain a cry in the wilderness" unless the church leaders are at the forefront of this advocacy. It must be recognized that when the church and politicians speak, everyone listens; for that reason, the role of the church is to bring these problems to the attention of the public arena via media and the UN.

**A Participant from Dominican Republic** emphasized the presence of the Caribbean, and the themes dedicated to advocacy have given their delegation time to experience how to do advocacy. The request was set forth that at every WCC assembly of this magnitude there is adequate Caribbean representation, and in conjunction, issues of the Caribbean should be added to the agenda of themes presented. Finally thanks to Chris for the invitation.

**Mrs. Clare Amos United Kingdom** reflected on the UN population report 2009 "Facing a Changing World" stating that it engages in the issue of the needs of women in the climate change debate.

## Special Thanks

**Mr. Ferguson** expressed deep appreciation on behalf of the World Council of Churches staff and those apart of the UNAW planning team. Initial thanks were extended to the Church Center to the United Nations that had been generous in providing the venue for UNAW as well as hospitality and services of the staff.

Thanks then went to those that played an essential component to UNAW sessions which were comprised of presenters<sup>17</sup>, session leaders<sup>18</sup>, and UN agencies<sup>19</sup>. In addition to those who participated in worship<sup>20</sup> and the coordination of it. The missions<sup>21</sup> helped evangelize WCC especially in Grenada and Switzerland.

UNAW 2009 was possible because of the collaboration with UNLO<sup>22</sup>, WCC Geneva staff<sup>23</sup>, and the ecumenical family<sup>24</sup> in New York, volunteers<sup>25</sup> and interpreter's<sup>26</sup> special thanks was given to the UNAW and GPTR

---

<sup>17</sup> Ms. Jessica Hawkinson, Ms. Elizabeth Lee, Ms. Mia Adjali, Rev. Christopher Ferguson, Rev. Kathleen Stone, Rev. Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala Mr. Olav Kjørven, Ms. Lois Dauway, H. E. Ambassador Colin Beck, Mr. Jakob Strom, Mrs. Mbari Kioni, Mr. Peter Emberson, Ms. Julia Berger, Ms. Esmeralda Brown, Ms. Tonya Frichner, Ms. Carol Pollack, Ms. Ana Maria Guacho, Ms. Musanga Timani, Rev. Matheus Adadikam, Mr. Argemiro Bailarin Bailarin, Bishop Juan Alberto Cardona, Rev. Jario Suarez, Ms. Maria Mercedes Duque-Lopez, Professor Lilia Solano, Prof. Jenny Neme-Neiva, Mr. Joseph Donnelly, Mr. Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, Rev. Dr. Hyunju Bae and Mr. Paul Divikar

<sup>18</sup> Dean Anders Gadaager, Mr. Dennis Frado, Ms. Kyriaki Avtzi, Ms. Kathryn Fournier, Rev. Dr. Ferdinand Anno, Rev. Doug Hostetter, Mr. Tito Conteras, Ms. Noemi Espinoza, Ms. Jessica Hawkinson, Dr. Guillermo Kerber, Mrs. Arieta Moceica

<sup>19</sup> UNHCR, UNPFII, and UN DPI-NGO.

<sup>20</sup> Rev. Kathleen Stone, Ms. Lorna Woodham, Ms. Leni Valeriano, Mr. Nader Muaddi, Dr. Jean-Gottfried Mutombo Nda, Rev. Elenie Poulos, Luciano Kovacs, Rev. Francois Pihaatae, Simon Dixon, Maria Chavez, Padre Alberto Franco, Pablo Moreno, Ms. Seta Hadesian, Dr. Salwa Morcos, Rev. Thulani Ndlazi, Rev. Clare Amos, Gregory Henderson, Dr. Beverly Mitchell, Amica Libura, Mr. Bernd Kappes, Rev. Sathianat Clarke, Mr. Jason Asbury

<sup>21</sup> Belize, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cuba, Guatemala, Grenada and AOSIS, Hungary, India, Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Nicaragua, New Zealand, Philippines, Poland, Samoa, and Solomon Islands.

<sup>22</sup> Rev. Christopher Ferguson, Ms. Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee, Ms. Meron Meshesha, Ms. Haeley Park, Ms. Melissa Mathieu

<sup>23</sup> Mr. Mark Beach, Ms. Patricia Bruschweiler, Rev. Maria Cazilda, Dr. Matthews George, Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory, Rev. Dr. Carlos Ham, Dr. Guillermo Kerber, Rev. Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala, Ms. Beatrice Mehari, Ms. Christina Papazoglou, Ms. Faautu Talapusi

<sup>24</sup> Ms. Hellen Grace Akwii-Wangusa, Ms. Martha Gardner, Mr. Joseph Donnelly, Mr. Tito Canteras, Ms. Kathryn Fournier, Ms. Rajyashri Waghay, Rev. Lynne West, Mr. Dennis Frado, Mr. Malte Lei, Mr. Doug Hostetter, Ms. Karen Flores, Ms. Jessica Hawkinson, Ms. Sara Lisherness, Ms. Esmeralda Brown, Rev. Kathleen Stone, Mr. Levi Bautista, Mr. Joe Kim, Ms. Mia Adjali

<sup>25</sup> Mr. Jason Asbury, Ms. Eryn Ashlei Bailey, Ms. Zemed Berhe, Ms. May Cheng, Ms. Anna Cipolla, Mr. Vilius Jankauskas, Ms. Peng Leong, Ms. Shash Lu, Mr. Marco Lutaya, Ms. Tina McCoy, Mr. David Michel, Ms. Lola Odunsi, Mr. Kevin O'Hara, Ms. Tina Reyes, Ms. Marquita Richards, Ms. Swati Shah, Ms. Karen Sinclair, Ms. Maegan Sinclair, Ms. Jenny Smith, Ms. Shanthi Solomon, Ms. Chuan Wang, Ms. Lorna Woodham, Ms. Jehan Young

planning team. Finally the supportive relationship with Caritas; the Lutheran and Presbyterians UN offices for lending their office space and computers for the week of UNAW was greatly appreciated.

Friday  
20 November 2009

## C. Closing Worship

*{A note from the Chaplain's Journal}*

*Attempting to both close down UNAW and thrust forward GPTR to do the work they now needed to do, was the final closing worship session. UNAW and GPTR participants were challenged to answer the question: "What do you carry with you of both the giftedness and the responsibility of having heard these persons" as they shared their experience listening to and responding to indigenous peoples, the Colombians, and those affected by the climate crisis. In between, "Cuando el Pobre" beautifully articulated the gift of those who had shared throughout the week.*

Friday  
20 November 2009

## D. UNAW Evaluation

Friday, 20 November 2009

**Moderator**

**Rev. Christopher Ferguson**

World Council of Churches Representative to the United Nations

*At the close of the UNAW, participant evaluations were provided as a written evaluation form covering five categories. Mr. Ferguson encouraged all to be ample in filling out the assessment, so that it may be noted in follow-up and suggestions for improvement. From a total of 80 delegates at UNAW 2009, 34 evaluations were submitted in the three different languages listed below all were translated and collected for the evaluation analysis.*

*19 –English speaking participants*

*2 - French speaking participants*

*13- Spanish speaking participants*

*Summary of the results:*

*The delegates of UNAW were asked to provide evaluative responses on the overall strength and weakness of the week long conference. This was segmented into worship, themes, mission visits and Regional Caucuses.*

Although the 8:00am start time was too early for some, the majority of respondents found the worship services to be well encompassing of the diversity of UNAW constituency with a powerful linkage of content to the three thematic priorities. 19 out of 22 respondents found the "overlapping dynamic" helpful for networking and building solidarity, the critical view of 36 percent was centered on the lack of follow-up and reference to

<sup>26</sup> Mr Don Rasoner (Spanish) and Ms Laurette Nsanze (French).



---

UNAW's past themes. Amongst those that answered the questions on the mission visits and Regional Caucuses, 3/4ths were appreciative of the experience of sharing ideas while taking advocacy into direct action.

*Also included was the assessment on the logistical aspects of time management, on-line registration, accommodations, and support of the UNAW staff.*

Over half the respondents agreed that "good time management" was displayed during the conference; some recommended a block of time be reserved for "free-time" to network. On-line registration was regarded as an efficient method for nearly all respondents in this category, with an individual that disagreed stating there were too many difficulties with the process. 15 out of 21 delegates noted that accommodations were favorable; the remainder was concerned with the trouble of finding bargained deals for hotels. Collectively, the remarks on ease of transportation and meals were considered ok to good. The interpretation was also held on high regards with the exception of one respondent who felt an emphasis was placed on Spanish and English speakers with few regards for the French speakers. All reviews of staff and volunteers were positive.

*The commentary and recommendation sections provided a space for suggestions and acknowledgement of key components to UNAW.*

Those who responded were overwhelmingly pleased with the "cross-section of the ecumenical family" and high level of participation for UNAW. Individual acknowledgements ranged from the appreciation in the integration of GPTR, gratitude of the interpreters, staff and volunteers. Some recommendations noted the need for an increase in media involvement, and the distribution of follow-up material on past conferences.

## **Written Evaluations Summary**

### **Strengths, Weaknesses and Recommendations (Worship, Themes, Mission Visits and Regional Caucus Activities)**

#### *Worship*

Amongst the total number of respondents, 91 percent were impressed by the organization and structure of the worship services; from the "rich cultural aspect," relevance to the thematic themes and the depth of the theology and ecumenism. The use of symbols, variety of languages, and gender balance presented during services was a composite of what the participants valued.

Although a majority of reviews of worship were positive a few suggestions for logistical improvement noted that the 8:00am daily start time was far too early for a week long conference. Specifically because a full breakfast was not provided for participants, the recommendation was to push the time back to 8:30am or provide breakfast.

#### *Themes*

From the pool of participants who provided answers for strengths of the themes, 19 out of 22 appreciated the selection and "overlapping dynamic" of the three themes, viewing this as an enhanced opportunity to network. Yet in addition to that, a small group was adamant about not allowing more than three themes in order to ensure depth and quality of discussion.

Those that responded critically of the theme process totaled 36 percent that commented on the lack of follow-up and reference to the past UNAW and the outcome of those conferences. Two respondents recognized that the progress of development for solutions was most cohesive in the Colombia theme.

---

### *Mission Visits & Regional Caucus*

Over 3/4<sup>ths</sup> of the respondents in this category said that the Mission Visits and the Regional Caucuses were good to excellent in that they offered an educational, “brainstorming” and connecting experience.

With the Mission Visits many noticed a lack of presence from what they considered some of the most influential mission on the subject of Climate Change i.e. Northern Missions such as the US. In efforts to avoid confusion and ambiguity some respondents recommended that a more focused approach to mission preparation be implemented for to yield a more targeted approach. For example, one disadvantage was the French and Spanish speaking representatives who did not have Talking Points translation available.

The Regional Caucuses were examined in regard to value added to participation; although the majority of respondents were enthusiastic about the intimate group setting there were 5 comments for improvements. The overarching concept emphasized that was not reached was the need for extensive discussion and follow-up in such a limited time.

### **Methodological evaluation (Sessions, Working Groups, Moderations and Time Spent)**

#### *Sessions*

Strengths from the methods used in the sessions included over half of the respondents agreeing on the “good time management”, others respected the balanced setting which allowed “everyone to have a voice.” On the other note recommendations mentioned by 38 percent of respondents in this category fell under two groups; one being the discomfort with room size and the other suggested a better breakup of session that would set time for strategizing, church leaders to meet, and reliable follow-up.

#### *Working Groups*

In the Working Groups category, those who responded were more likely to respond positively, ranging from okay to good on topics like participation of delegates, opportunities to share ideas, and network. Among those who responded negatively however, the concerns varied from “the different expertise levels of delegates”, the low diversity of age, and Latin American community (most from Colombia).

#### *Moderations*

This section of the evaluation yielded few responses 5 out of 34 total evaluations. Of this 4/5 had an attitude towards moderations recorded as good to excellent. An individual response stated that it “didn’t appear that moderator’s actually lead the sessions” and that facilitation in small groups was poor.

#### *Time Spent*

There were mixed reviews under the “time spent” section, most gave “good” as a brief reflection of how in their opinion time was managed throughout the flow of the conference. Some individual recommendations were made with regards to a need for some “free time” incorporated into the agenda, starting the session in timely manner, and that the full week was tiring.

### **Qualitative and Quantitative Evaluation of Participation**

#### *Qualitative*

Among those who responded about the participation in qualitative terms the “cross-section of the ecumenical family” as well as the “high level” of participants and speakers was what they were overwhelmingly pleased

---

with. Some stand-alone proposals consisted of an increase in interactive sessions, make sure keynotes are not so general, and an integration of the specialized ministries advocacy work.

#### *Quantitative*

3/5<sup>th</sup>s of those that responded to Quantitative section said that they agreed with the amount of delegates and space provided. The only reservations were the remainder of respondents who noted the serious need for an increase in Caribbean presence at UNAW.

### **Logistical Evaluation (On-line Registration, Accommodations, Transportation, Meals, and Interpretation)**

#### *On-line Registration*

Out of the 26 respondents 22 rated on-line registration as good to great for accessibility and support of staff, while 3 were okay with service and the remaining 1 commented that there were “too many difficulties” with it.

#### *Accommodations*

A higher number of respondents (15) found the accommodations to be favorable, with a less than half (6) who had trouble finding bargained deals for hotels. Specifically 2 individuals suggested WCC conduct negotiations for better prices.

#### *Transportation*

All respondents in the category of transportation found the information provided beneficial.

#### *Meals*

Nearly all respondents, with the consideration of one, enjoyed the meals during the duration of UNAW. The individual intervention was that in an era of Climate Change, the catering selected should reflect those that are conscious of the environment i.e. producing less garbage.

#### *Interpretation*

The interpretation service was generally held on high regards; with the exception that one respondent felt that translation was catered more towards the Spanish and English speaking delegates with few regards for the French speakers.

#### *Meeting Room & Staff and Volunteers*

All reviews were positive ranging from good to excellent with no reservations.

### **Other Comments and Suggestions**

*With a total of 32 comments in this section they can be summarized as follow:*

#### *Praise:*

In praise for UNAW, there was enthusiasm for the incorporation of GPTR, an appreciation of ecumenical network and fellowship, establishment of relationships with UN as well as personal thanks to entire UNAW staff and offices, the UNLO team, interpreters and all volunteers.

#### *Recommendations*

Comments suggested improvement on media involvement for promotion of conference, possible themes for UNAW 2010, for participants from South to please consider full day of rest to adjust, to provide detailed reference material of information from present and past conference on web.

---

## ***VI. Global Platform for Theological Reflection Report***

---

### **Praying, speaking out and acting together: Theological Reflection on Advocacy**

*A joint contribution of the WCC's Global Platform for Theological Reflection and  
the United Nations Advocacy Week  
Manhasset, New York, November 20-22, 2009.*

#### **Background and context**

The theological reflection text which follows was developed in response to a five- day meeting of the fifth annual United Nations Advocacy Week (UNAW), and a three-day meeting of the Global Platform for Theological Reflection (GPTR), in Manhasset, New York, from November 15 through November 22, 2009. The focus of this joint UNAW-GPTR meeting was on three areas of crisis: Climate Displaced Peoples, Indigenous Peoples' Rights, and Colombia. The theme of the GPTR meeting was "Praying, Speaking Out, and Acting Together." During the UNAW meeting, more than seventy-five people from every region of the globe participated in sessions held at the Church Center for the United Nations (CCUN). There, at the CCUN, we worshiped corporately; and gave and received reports from advocates working on behalf of those adversely affected by the crises noted above. Although we heard personal pleas which grieved our hearts deeply from our brothers and sisters of our member churches, we were also privileged to engage in joyful fellowship as we made new friends and re-connected with old friends over refreshments and a common mid-day meal each day. During the five days we spent together at the UNAW, a deep sense of community was forged.

After the adjournment of the meeting of the UNAW, a much smaller contingent of twenty-one met for the Global Platform for Theological Reflection during the weekend. At the St. Ignatius Retreat Center in Manhasset, we gathered to reflect theologically on what we had seen, heard, experienced, and felt during the previous days, as preparation for the task of developing this theological text on advocacy. Although we were a small group, our hope was that the text we developed would inspire a wider and ongoing debate with member churches globally. Our group was comprised of biblical scholars, theologians, and social activists. We were vastly diverse in age; race and ethnicity; cultural experiences and backgrounds; nationalities; and theological perspectives. Although the task of theological consensus-building was complicated, it was also quite exciting, as pragmatic and experiential insights enriched the content of our reflection. Each one of us came to the task of contributing to the development of this text with a desire that it would be truly responsive to the needs and concerns of the members of the World Council of Churches (WCC). In the formal presentations from GPTR participants, frequent small-group sessions, periodic plenary reflections, and sharing over common meals, we overcame the difficulties inherent in such a gathering in what we believe was a true spirit of *koinonia*.

As a result, the method of our reflection was inductive, rather than deductive. The resultant text emerged in the context of paying particular attention to one another as we shared not only empirical data regarding our respective circumstances related to the focus of the conferences. We also shared our stories of heartache and sorrow, as well as the resolve and the hope which continues to fuel our struggle for justice for all of God's creation. In our reflections, we drew from our distinctive experiences of faith, the wisdom of our cultural

---

traditions which have been passed down to us, as well as from biblical texts and theological traditions of the past and present. In this context of sharing insights, praying and talking with each other, key themes and insights emerged regarding the nature of advocacy which we believe are more responsive to the crises which plague us at this time.

We acknowledge that there have been previous attempts to offer guidance to the churches on advocacy. However, as we reviewed previous texts, we were convinced that these earlier efforts failed to question sufficiently the corruption of global economic, social, and political structures. As such, we believe that previous theological resources have been inadequate to guide our member churches toward the kind of advocacy strategies which would address the plight of significant populations adversely affected by the concerns cited above. A more realistic reading of the signs of the time, ecumenically, must function on the local, regional, national, and global levels, simultaneously – not just one. We determined that a new guideline for theological reflection should be made available to the WCC members that would provide them with cultural wisdom and biblical and theological resources for the kind of advocacy which could facilitate a more holistic transformation in the lives of our sisters and brothers. As a result of our hearing the persistent cries of lament from fellow Christians, and hearing the reports on the current efforts of United Nations officials to respond to the human tragedies and ecological devastation, we are convinced of the severity of these crises and the urgent need for effective advocacy rooted in the cultural, biblical, and theological resources of our collective communities of faith.

We believe that churches are called to be nurturers of a culture of life in the context of cultures of death. Our intentions in this document are to: 1) describe more clearly the nature of a Christian understanding of advocacy in our time; 2) present more compelling reasons to exercise more faithfully the prophetic task of stronger advocacy; and 3) provide some of the necessary resources for the churches to improve their efforts toward the kind of advocacy that fosters liberating change. We have been prayerful in our discernment of what God is calling us to do in this context and believe that the theological reflection which follows is a faithful response to that divine call. Our hope is that this current document will encourage our churches to develop even better strategies for effective engagement and accompaniment with those who suffer under these present crises.

Although this text arises out of our engagement with our sisters and brothers who suffer unjustly and disproportionately in their particular contexts, we believe that readers will find many important insights which would be easily applicable to other contexts which also demand advocacy. We believe we can answer affirmatively that our theological reflections have responded attentively to the sense of urgency conveyed by the testimonies and stories shared by our sisters and brothers in the global ecumenical community.

## **What We Mean by Advocacy**

We believe it is important to articulate our understanding of the nature of advocacy. We offer the following definition:

*Advocacy is a prophetic activity of the churches, in which we accompany and support our sisters and brothers who struggle mightily for justice and peace in the context of injustice and violence against fellow human beings and the rest of creation. Advocacy involves speaking up for those who are silenced in their efforts to rectify injustice. It demands our engagement with the issues and initiatives of*



---

*those who struggle for life, justice, equity, rights, and peace. Advocacy is a mission activity of the church in the world. It is one way in which the church participates in the ongoing mission dei.*

Christian faith is not only life-affirming, but also change-oriented. Such faith seeks to effect change in external realities for the flourishing of life. Therefore, advocacy is an inevitable Christian vocation of affirming the sanctity and dignity of life.

We recognize that advocacy is multi-dimensional. We also acknowledge that there is no single understanding of the nature of this holy work of accompaniment nor is there one prescribed method of advocacy that fits every context. Any theology of advocacy must take into account the diversity of contexts in which this form of witness may take place. However, despite the inevitable variety in carrying out the task of advocacy, we suggest that there are three major components of the kind of advocacy demanded in these times. These components are: praying, speaking out, and acting together.

## **Praying**

Advocacy arises from our personal and corporate worship experiences as people of God, and is expressed first and foremost through our prayer for others. Intercessory prayer is itself an act of faithfulness that Jesus himself practiced on behalf of his disciples, and those of the future (John 17). The apostles, including Paul, would exhort fellow believers to pray for one another – even one's enemies. The ministry of accompaniment should be reflected not only in our prayers, but also through our litanies, sermons, as well as through our poetry, songs, and other acts of creative expression. The ministry of accompaniment should be most visible in our celebrations of the Eucharist. As the late Father Pedro Arrupe<sup>1</sup> reminds us,

If somewhere in the world there is hunger, the Eucharistic celebration is in some way incomplete. In the Eucharist, Christ comes to the encounter together with the poor, the oppressed, and the hungry of the earth, who through him look at us waiting for help, for justice. *[From his address at the Forty-First International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia, in 1976.]*<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, as the prophet Isaiah warns us in chapter 58, the kind of worship, expressions of piety, and spiritual discipline the God of Justice seeks is the kind that loosens the bonds of injustice, undoes the yoke of oppression, feeds the hungry, shelters the homeless, clothes the naked, and brings them into community with us.

A life of this kind of prayer and worship, which reflects the love of God and the love of our neighbor, as expressed not only in words, but more importantly, in action, forms the foundation for the caliber of advocacy we propose. It is permeated with a spirit of love which is fiercely directed toward justice and peace, not only for humanity, but for our Mother Earth and all creatures. We believe that this kind of spiritual discipline and heart-felt commitment are needed to fuel our engagement, for the work of accompaniment and solidarity is long and arduous.

## **Speaking Out**

There is no question that advocacy involves a prophetic dimension of witness. Part of the function of advocacy is to speak truth to power. There are multiple ways of doing so. In some instances it will involve quiet diplomacy or careful negotiations governed by a spirit of mutuality and reciprocity. At other times it may require an uncompromising candor along with persistent, firm pressure. Advocacy includes educating some and

---

reminding others within our own churches, regarding not only our corporate, but also our spiritual and moral responsibility for all of creation. This advocacy also includes offering guidance to persons and agencies with respect to the ways in which they can better serve those among us who are in need.

Within the context of our dialogue and reflection during the UNAW and GPTR, many of us expressed the belief that our churches have not always exercised this prophetic dimension of ministry. Historically, we know that the churches have been co-opted too often by governments, and fallen captive to economic, social, and political systems. We are also aware that our churches have been too close to power, and identified far too often with the ideologies of the nation-state. We do not believe that we can advocate justly, if we fail to acknowledge that the prophetic task of advocacy takes place within imperial contexts; and that we cannot hope to be credible witnesses, promoters of peace, or agents of transformation if our churches fail to distance themselves from these powers and also hold them accountable.

At times our churches, through their desire to exercise power, have forgotten their rightful place among the poor. Our churches have sometimes lost their way. Too often our communities of faith have failed to stand with those who suffer. They have been complicit in perpetuating racism, sexism, poverty, violence, and even war. These realizations call for an acknowledgment of these transgressions, collective repentance from these evils, and a re-commitment to change our ways of relating to political systems and powers in keeping with the proclamation and ministerial vision of Jesus Christ. However, as we seek to return to the pattern of discipleship to which we have been called by Christ, we realize that we must not presume to *be* the voice of the poor, but rather the *amplifier* of their voices. This requires that we walk *alongside* our sisters and brothers, accompanying them in solidarity, rather than presuming to lead them paternalistically, as though we alone know the path which they should take. There is a form of power which resides in the social location of people who are aware of their covenant with God. They have a conviction that things as they are must end, but they also have a hope fueled by a vision of community. What we are describing here is a “hopeful realism,” where we recognize the need for a contextual approach, which promotes community-based initiatives that allow for a meaningful process of radical change.

During our time of Bible study and reflection in Manhasset, we found from the Old Testament scriptures diverse ways of speaking truth to power, whether it is royal, governmental, or priestly in nature. For example, in Amos 7:1-17, the prophet Amos speaks to the chief priest. In this text we have a clear sense of the link between religious and political factions. In this context, the prophet was feared because it was believed that his word was very powerful because what was spoken would actually come to pass. In 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12, King David is challenged in a very subtle way by Nathan the prophet, whose method is indirect and his message told through a parable. By this method, King David was condemned by his own mouth. From these examples, along with other Old Testament texts, we learned that it is sometimes dangerous to speak truth to power.

We also learned from our Bible study lessons which challenged our own motives in advocacy. We found that sometimes in our role of advocates, we are sometimes caught in the grip of antagonisms which allow arrogance and the pride of righteousness to flourish within us. As in the case of Jonah, we may not want those to whom we speak the truth to repent and do the right thing. Sometimes the work of advocacy reveals important insights about the nature of God: namely, God’s capacity for mercy. Additionally, we have learned in our study of Old Testament prophets that there is a dual role of the prophet. This dual role is most apparent in our reflection on texts in the book of Jeremiah. The prophet not only speaks the Word of God to the powers that be; the prophet also intercedes for the people. This dual role can sometimes tear the prophet in two. The task of prophetic

---

ministry cannot be undertaken apart from grace. Because the prophetic task requires courage, strength, and steadfastness, those who willingly shoulder the burden of that task must rely on the power of the Spirit.

Our time of deep reflection and dialogue in the context of the UNAW and GPTR meetings also taught us that not only does advocacy involve speaking truth to power, it also involves the act of lamentation. In fact, we believe that lamentation is another way of speaking the truth. It is a way that not only the oppressed can be heard, but they can also be empowered to act. In those instances, speaking and listening become both a spiritual *and* political act. In such biblical texts as Number 27:1-11; Lamentations 5:1-5; and Ezekiel 27:1-11, those who suffer and grieve in the context of their oppression and domination are allowed to speak of this, with the assurance that their lamentations are heard and noted. Not only do we lament and weep, but in Jeremiah 8:18-9:1, we learn that *God* laments and weeps, too. If there is no place for lament, then questions regarding justice disappear and the language of lament is made to appear inappropriate. Without lamentation those who might have accompanied the oppressed in their work for change would not be moved. As a spiritual speech and act, lamentation does not end with cries of sorrow. For we note that in Psalm 22, the psalm ends with an affirmation of faith in God, which restores life and dignity, and animates the psalmist. We maintain that serious change will not occur without lamentation.

## **Acting Together**

Advocacy calls for a commitment to explore and implement more effective strategies for genuine holistic transformation. It involves actively listening to our brothers and sisters and allowing them to lament freely and unreservedly, even when it overwhelms us and brings on sorrow. It involves trust in *their* discernment as to what their needs are, rather than imposing our own ideas as to what is needed. It seeks, encourages, and assists their active participation from all sectors of the community. Advocacy emerges out of an understanding of the nature of the churches as members of one Body – the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). This means that such advocacy is people-centered and community-based, rather than institutionally driven and hierarchically directive. Advocacy requires an unwavering commitment to accompany those who suffer, in season and out of season, whether it is costly or inconvenient, whether the need is within our own local communities or thousands of miles away. In short, advocacy embodies a servant-church paradigm for ministry in the world, which is not only concerned with individuals but with the redemption of communities. This mission paradigm seeks the transformation of the structures and systems of sin and injustice and the promotion of the fullness of life for all persons and for all of creation. We believe this kind of advocacy springs out of an alternate vision of life together, where communities of faith act together based upon values consistent with the reign of God.

There are several biblical texts from the New Testament which invite our member churches to consider paradigms of advocacy which strengthen and empower those of us who face crises of a global proportion. For example, in Mark 3:1-8, in the story of the healing of the man with a withered hand, we discover that Jesus brings the marginalized to the center of activity. This man had been pushed to the margins because he was viewed as not being whole because of his disability. However, Jesus brought the disabled man out of a position of exclusion to one of communal embrace. By ensuring that those who do not count in our economic, social, cultural, and political structures, are brought to the center of advocacy, we become agents of a living theology which values life amidst cultures of death.

---

Other New Testament texts speak quite openly about a way of organizing our common life together which affirms that communities of faith not only pray for one another but they also actively work in common when the survival of its members is being threatened. For example, as stated in Acts 4:32-37, none of the believers living in community claimed private ownership of any possession. As a result, none among them suffered in need. Likewise, in Acts 2:43-47, all who believed were together and had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods and distributed the proceeds to all. Additionally, the text tells us that they broke bread together and ate their food with “glad and generous hearts.” Moreover, according to Acts 11: 27-30 and Romans 15:25-26, after a famine, members of the community sent relief to their brothers and sisters who were in need.

### **Self-Critical Reflection on Advocacy**

As participants of the GPTR prayerfully reflected on the nature of advocacy, we gave considerable thought to the underlying motives governing our prayer and worship, our approach to the prophetic task, and the quality of our actions. Many of us have been engaged in advocacy for quite some time. We are aware of strategies which work and those which do not. But we probed deeper. We asked ourselves key questions, which included: *Who speaks for the oppressed? Who acts for them? On whose terms do we advocate? For whose benefit do we act?* We believe that without giving attention to these questions, we would be complicit in silencing those for whom we purport to speak.

We were reminded that Christian theology involves a quality of reflection which requires us to be courageous, self-critical, and constructive, as we encounter heavenly matters which embrace earthly things. Ours is a collective journey of participants in the transformation of the world in accordance with the vision of God, in the way of Jesus Christ, along side the Holy Spirit. This agenda is not ours, nor do we work alone. Even as we acknowledge that theological reflection is not done in a vacuum; and that it is done in contexts involving empires, in which economic, social, and political powers work at cross purposes, we are reminded that there are many kinds of power. Power is never just brute political power. Because of God’s grace and gifts, power is ubiquitous. Thus, there is also power available for the victims of regimes and abusive power. Realizing this gives us a reason to hope and to continue to struggle.

We were reminded that our advocacy should reaffirm the spaciousness and generosity of our triune God. We are called to trust resistively and restlessly in the providence of God our Creator. Our trust and surrender to God’s providence is never the antithesis of advocacy. Prophets can operate in hindsight or with foresight. Those who operate in hindsight focus only on the negative circumstances surrounding them and remain mired in acts of the past. Prophets who operate with foresight are those who see beyond the negative, are energized by the vision of the reign of God, and advocate for justice and peace *now*. Their activity is shaped by the pattern of Jesus Christ the Liberator, where solidarity and advocacy go together. As we move into the fullness of life shaped by the Spirit, we find surprise coupled with advocacy. That element of surprise shows us that our advocacy is able to work through and with the Spirit to alter the course of a variety of forces lodged against us.

By reaffirming the mystery of God’s economy we inject a “Thou-ness” into our advocacy, which can prevent us from relating to those for whom we advocate as instruments of our own ends. This Trinitarian framework can keep before us that the image of God also resides in those who oppress us. This calls us to *re-member* the

---

organic nature of life – where human justice and ecological responsibility can no longer be separated from each other. The crises of global warming, continuing discrimination against indigenous people across the globe, and the suffering which plagues our brothers and sisters in Colombia all demand new forms of engagement. We believe a Trinitarian framework, which injects the notion of “Thou-ness” into each other, and all creatures of Mother Earth, can help us in this constructive engagement of advocacy, locally and globally.

### **Multiple Levels of Advocacy**

Just as advocacy by our churches is a ministry with multiple dimensions, it is also a ministry of accompaniment conducted on multiple levels. As individuals, we may be called upon to pray, speak on behalf of, or act together with a sister or brother within our local churches or within the communities in which are churches are located, as they work to obtain the kind of support needed to meet their basic needs. Beyond the personal level, our local churches themselves are often approached to accompany those in our respective communities who are struggling to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Of course, at a macro-level, there are national and international Christian organizations whose mission is to advocate for large numbers of people to help eliminate the unjust conditions which make it difficult for people to flourish in their own contexts. However, we wish to emphasize that advocacy is *not* a specialized ministry limited to large organizations alone, or reserved for a courageous few. Rather, it is, in fact, a fundamental activity of Christian discipleship which we may be called upon to engage in, both personally, locally, and globally. Whether our advocacy takes place at the level of our local churches or in ecumenical contexts, advocacy is a visible expression of the unity of faith and practice the churches profess in the name of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **Why Do Church Advocacy?**

We affirm that God is a God of life who loves and cares for the world. Life is an expression of God’s continuing presence for the glory of God. Anything that overshadows this understanding is a threat to life in community. Advocacy is an act of obedience to the divine call to be faithful stewards of the good creation and to be our siblings’ keepers. The advocacy which we have articulated here is a concrete expression of the commandment to love God and neighbor as ourselves. It is constitutive of our call to follow the way of Jesus Christ as his faithful disciples, attuned to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Even though in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament we are reminded often of the brevity and fragility of life, the created world and what dwells therein is deemed “good.” Its intrinsic goodness arises solely from the fact that God is the “author” of the good creation. Affirmation of the goodness of creation, despite the presence of sin and corruption, entails recognition of the value and worth of all human beings and the rest of creation. This theological connection transcends familial ties, patriarchy, racial and ethnic categories, caste systems, national allegiances, and global alliances. This recognition makes claims on us. The quality of our life together depends upon the degree to which we are committed to the common good and exercise our obligations to one another – especially to those treated as the “least.”

Insofar as we our bound *theologically* to each other and all that lives on Earth, we are obligated to manifest this bonded-ness in the context of our economic, social, and political life together. This theological bonded-ness should be reflected in the institutions that relate to the making of policy in the societies in which we live. The cries of present hardship and impending disaster reverberate in the heavens, and the urgent appeals for aid from the churches, are a rebuke and a judgment against any notion that our churches have no obligation to advocate along side those in distress.

---

Moreover, there are texts from both Testaments which convey quite clearly that concrete acts of care, accompaniment, and solidarity with those who are oppressed are clearly the kind of actions which should govern the lives of people in covenant with God. Micah 6:8 tells us that God requires us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Luke 4:16-21, in which Jesus inaugurates his public ministry, is a passage quoted directly from Isaiah 61. In the passage from Luke, Jesus announces the nature of his ministry, which includes: preaching good news to the poor, proclaiming release to those who are captive, recovery of sight to those who are blind, and the release of the oppressed of the land. In response to a question regarding who our neighbor is, Jesus tells us in Luke 10:25-37 that our neighbor is the one who stands in need, regardless of the many racial, economic, cultural, social, and political barriers we might erect to obscure our connection to one another. And finally, in the parable of the sheep and the goats, as recorded in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus identifies himself with the ones who are in need. When we give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, we do so unto Christ. Likewise, when we fail to do any of those things, we actually fail to do so unto Christ.

Through our praying, speaking out, and acting together, we have come to realize that our concern and care must extend beyond our fellow human beings. Part of what our reflection upon the impact of climate-displaced peoples and the struggles of indigenous populations globally does is to remind us that the recognition of our interrelatedness to and interdependence upon all creatures prescribes a deep respect, a sense of mutuality and reciprocity, along with attention to balance and harmony within creation. Mother Earth is not only our home, but is the home of all created life. What we do has an affect on the rest of the Earth. This being the case, we believe our churches have an obligation to nurture and cultivate the values of deep respect, mutuality, reciprocity, and attention to balance and harmony, for the sake of communal well-being.

We are living under a current global structure that fails to meet the criteria for a truly just system for all creation. We are participants in a global economic system that fails to meet the criteria for a just system for everyone. We cannot continue in this vein and be faithful to God's call on the churches. A theological conception of advocacy forces us to renounce all forms of human degradation, environmental devastation, and violence. Advocacy calls us to acknowledge and affirm a divine basis for supporting and preserving the common bond between us.

We must commit ourselves to developing more imaginative ways of integrating our worship life with a more robust witness of the church that models engagement with all of those who are suffering. Our faith in Christ, our love for God and our neighbors, and our hope in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit give us the courage and the commitment to accompany our fellow sisters and brothers to affect the kind of global change that supports a more holistic life.

## **What is at Stake If We Do Not Act?**

We have heard an expressed need from among our sisters and brothers for restoration, renewal, and healing of that which is broken on the Earth. There is a cloud of witnesses in the impoverished, the degraded, the hungry, the displaced who stand as a grim reminder of what happens when individuals, communities, and nations are disinclined to become involved, because they are being impartial or neutral. We contend that once we realize



what is truly at stake, we cannot afford to remain impartial or neutral about human suffering and exploitation, and the degradation of the Earth.

When we fail to exercise our prophetic vocation, God grieves. When we fail to intercede on behalf of the marginalized, forgotten, and abused, we abandon an opportunity for service and lose credibility in our witness to the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. Our inaction or inadequate action denies our love for God when those of us in the community have means, and see our siblings in need, but decline to offer the kind of help that would bring relief. The kingdom of God impels us to work toward justice and peace. Even the world is expecting leadership from the churches.

We urge our brothers and sisters in the ecumenical community to exercise leadership in this area; to seek to collaborate with others, whether from secular or religious groups, who are committed to an alternative vision of life together. Impartiality or neutrality or inadequate attempts to reform structures of domination that wound and destroy will not do. By honoring the claims of theological kinship we can become more like Christ, as we are called to be. By honoring our claims of interconnectedness, we bear witness in a manner that does reaffirm the spaciousness and generosity of God the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all the Earth.

---

<sup>1</sup>Father Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991) was a Catholic priest and member of the order of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). As the 28<sup>th</sup> Superior-General or head of the highest ranking authority of the Jesuit order, from 1965-1983, he saw the promotion of justice, as well as the Catholic tradition, as an essential focus of the work of the Society of Jesus. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedro\\_Arrupe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedro_Arrupe).

<sup>2</sup>The International Eucharistic Congress is held every five years, since 1881, to engage in personal and group Eucharistic adoration; receive the Eucharist fervently; have a public demonstration of faith in the Eucharist; and discuss the implications of Eucharistic belief. The Forty-First International Eucharistic Congress was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from August 1-8, 1976. The theme of this Congress was "The Eucharist and the Hungers of the Human Family." Father Arrupe delivered a sermon during the Forty-First Congress. See "Spiritual Olympics," Archbishop John P. Foley, [www.kofc.org/un/eb/en/publications/columbia/detail/1920.html](http://www.kofc.org/un/eb/en/publications/columbia/detail/1920.html) and "The Excitement of an International Eucharistic Congress," Sandy Klaud, [www.realpresence.org/eucharst/misc/excite.htm](http://www.realpresence.org/eucharst/misc/excite.htm).

