



PART I MINUTES

World Student Christian Federation



35th meeting of the General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation

Bogotá D.C., Colombia

27 February – 5 March 2015

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MINUTES

INTRODUCTION

▪ The 35th General Assembly

The 35th meeting of the General Assembly of the WSCF (henceforth 'Assembly' or 'GA') took place from February 27th 2015 to March 5th 2015 at the YMCA centre, Bogotá D.C., Colombia. Over 150 people attended in various capacities – delegates, guests, Senior Friends, Partners, resource people. The names and contact emails of most of the attendees are given in the appendices in part II of this document¹.

The theme of the Assembly was *We are many, we are one, sent out to build God's peace*. It invited members to consider again the Federation's motto *Ut Omnes Unum Sint (that they may be one)* taken from Jesus' prayer to the Father, in the context of a diverse Christian community of different nationalities and cultures uniting as one to build God's peace with justice in today's broken and fragmented world. The Assembly gathered in Bogotá explicitly to support the ongoing peace-building process initiated by the Government of Colombia and supported by the people, the churches and civil society to end decades of conflict in that country.

¹ List of Participants, Appendix 18, page 185.

The Assembly also met to address its own particular funding crisis brought about by a failure over many years to reform its governance structures and administration to enable it to survive as a coordinated global organization fit for purpose in a corporate world fundamentally changed since the financial crash of 2008. The urgency of the funding crisis was manifest in the enforced deferral of the Assembly from August 2014 to February/March 2015 in order to allow more time to fund-raise for the event.

Following the success of the Senior Friends meeting held concurrently with the 34th General Assembly in Montreal in 2008 the Federation's leadership invited Senior Friends to participate fully in the 35th GA and a significant number accepted this invitation. Senior Friends spoke on behalf of partner organisations, led bible study, contributed to plenaries, working groups and discussion sessions, provided pastoral support and assisted in providing the written and photographic record of the Assembly. Their many contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

The program aims of the 35th General Assembly may be summarised as follows:

1. To express solidarity and support for the people of Colombia in their efforts to rebuild their country on a foundation of justice and peace and to do the same for victims of conflict in other parts of the world.
2. To address in a fundamental way the reform of the Federation's governance and administration and to approve a plan to transition the Federation through the process of reform.
3. To renew and revitalize its vision and mission – *sent to build God's peace*.
4. To commit to strengthening the theological foundations of WSCF.
5. To identify priority goals and objectives for 2015-2019 in areas such as human identity, advocacy and peace building.
6. To bring clearer definition to the Federation's partnerships and networks.
7. To develop the role of Senior Friends in the life of WSCF.
8. To elect new officers and executive committee
9. To receive new national movements.

At the close of the Assembly, the Executive Committee of the WSCF issued a message of gratitude to the Colombian churches and ecumenical organizations, the Colombian government, and the People of Colombia, and to its partners and supporters²

² Appendix 19, Page 189.

FRIDAY 27 FEBRUARY – DAY 1

- 8.00 – 9.00: Bible Study 1

The first bible study session was led by Rev. Lekisha Reed of the Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church who reflected on the meaning of solidarity and love expressed through the story of how Esther in Chapters 2 – 4 faced the edict of King Xerxes to destroy the Jews, a people 'who keep themselves separate'. She challenged us to reflect on who are those in our communities who are threatened with destruction, why, and who can protect them. She saw in Esther's response to the distress of Mordecai 'at the King's gate' a challenge to us to see who is asking us for help and how are our Movements responding and in her decision to 'go to the King, even though it is against the law and if I perish, I perish' a challenge to us to take risks to challenge injustice and to act in solidarity with those on the periphery suffering fear and oppression. She used music and song to inspire the delegates and invited each movement to adopt a song.

- 9.30 – 13.00: Women's and Men's Pre-Assemblies

WSCF Women's Pre-Assembly

The Women's Pre-Assembly was led by Exco member and Middle East Regional Secretary Elsy Wakil (Lebanon) who focused on women's role in peace building. Rev. Gloria Ullua, WCC President from Colombia spoke about the history of the conflict in Colombia and how it has affected women in particular. She explained the current peace negotiations taking place in Cuba and urged participants to support the process and promote women's initiatives to build lasting peace in their communities. Delegates then spoke of their own experiences in countries with similar situations of conflict and war. This was followed by a sharing of difficulties experienced in becoming women leaders in national SCMs and committing to support each other as women in WSCF. The session ended with an introduction to the Sexual Harassment policy.

WSCF Men's Pre-Assembly

The Men's Pre-Assembly was led by WSCF Exco members Marco Fornerone (Italy) and Immanuel Kitnan (Sri Lanka). The leaders shared their personal journeys and hopes that had brought them to the GA and reflected on the power of language to express male domination but also to open safe spaces for encounter, understanding, expression of emotion and exchange of ideas. Marco led a reflection on the Bible's use of language which was followed by individual reflections on the theme of the Assembly. Immanuel concluded the session by introducing the WSCF policy on Sexual Harassment.

- 14.30 – 16.00: Opening Plenary Address – Professor Johnston McMaster³

The plenary address was delivered by Professor Johnston McMaster of the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, on the theme of the GA *We are many, we are one, sent to build God's Peace*. Professor McMaster began by pointing to the ecological evidence of interdependence as the basis for healthy biological diversity before addressing his topic under three headings: *God in a post-colonial world of violence, Just Peacebuilding and Peace as a sacred and interreligious vocation*. Examining the roots of violence in today's world with a particular emphasis on the Middle East, he concluded that 'much of the violence that we witness has colonial roots and is the harvest of colonial sowing' which itself derived from the union of secular power and religion, created in 431CE when 'the church got into bed with empire, colluded with militarism and power as domination, and the church mimicked the empire in its power structures and dress.' This legacy of European hegemony is made more toxic by American interventionism and militarism, blessed by a 1500 year old god of violence and war. 'This is the world in which we are called upon to build God's peace'. He went on to show how neither the concepts of the just war or pacifism are adequate to deal with the destructive capacity of modern warfare or the complex roots of civil conflict. In their place, he argued, the paradigm of 'just peacemaking' will take us further. He listed ten practical ways to just peacemaking before demonstrating how in a global world, Judaism, Christianity and Islam 'cannot any longer make total, absolute and final truth claims' but rather, 'in humility, and perhaps in Christianity in particular, we need to lower our voices and realize that in the landscape of truth, there is also lived interdependence.' It was a powerful address leaving much food for reflection and also hope: 'The God who sends us out to build peace will be envisioned in a radically different way from the god of Christendom, imperialism and the warrior god. The sense of the sacred at the heart of all life will draw us into peace as a sacred and interreligious vocation.'

- 16.30 – 17.30: Opening Actions and Roll Call

Welcome and Announcements

The General Secretary welcomed delegates and guests to the 35th General Assembly and made several announcements on practical matters before proceeding to a Roll Call of officers and Movements present and their delegates. Officers and delegates were asked to seat themselves in the centre of the auditorium when voting or roll call was taking place, with guests and non-voting members seated in the side aisles.

³ Appendix 1 page 52

Roll Call:

Regions	Movements	Delegates present
Africa	22	13
Asia Pacific	18	13
Europe	19	13
Latin America/Caribbean	9	8
Middle East	7	7
North America	2	2
Sub-total	77	56
Executive Committee	16	15
Total	93	71

▪ **17.30 – 19.30: Address – the Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson**

The Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson, General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches who was joined on the podium by Milton Mejia from Colombia. He addressed the theme ‘SCM’s gathered in Colombia: seeing, interrogating and transforming the world.’ It was a powerful and direct challenge to delegates to put into practice in their local situations what they had heard in Professor McMaster’s paper.

▪ **20.30 – 22.00 Welcome Event**

The Welcome Event featured lively praise and worship songs from Latin America led by a choir of young people from Colombia. WSCF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Secretary Marcelo Élités welcomed the GA participants and introduced the members of the Local Organizing Committee, headed by Lizette Prieto Garcia, General Assembly Coordinator.

SATURDAY 28 FEBRUARY – Day 2

- 8.00 – 9.00: Bible Study 2

The second bible study session was led by Rev. Rd. Dario Barolin, General Secretary of the Association of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in the Caribbean and Latin America who reflected on the text Isaiah 56: vss 1 – 8 in which Isaiah speaks of the son of the foreigner (Jews born outside Israel) and the eunuch (as a sexual minority, considered ‘a dry tree’ by the Jews). Isaiah challenges the people of his time to make room for these ‘outsiders’ in a community based only on the justice of God. ‘For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.’

“This is a text of great significance for the New Testament, (viz. Philip’s baptism of the eunuch in Acts). We therefore need to ask ourselves who is the outsider in our communities and what must we do to ensure that the outsider too is embraced by God’s justice, is included in God’s ‘house of prayer for all nations.’”

- 9.00 – 9.15: Daily Recap

Elsy Wakil provided a brief recap of the events of Friday and the General Secretary made a number of announcements of a housekeeping nature.

- 9.15 – 9.30: Welcome Address on behalf of the President of Colombia

Lorena Rios, Counsellor for the President of Colombia on religious matters, welcomed the GA to Bogota on behalf of the President in the following terms:

“You are all very welcome to our country at this time. We understand that where the government cannot go, the Churches can go and we value what the organisations based on Faith our doing. Our government is passing through a very important process in Cuba and we believe a peace agreement will be signed. We believe that you as a global faith organization have a key role and we value what you are doing. In this country where religion is strong, we want to include other religions, including non-Catholic religions. We believe these organisations will bear fruit. Thank you for what you are doing. You have come to Colombia in a very important moment. Thank you and welcome.”

The Chairperson thanked Ms Rios for her remarks and commended them to the Assembly.

- **9.30 – 9.45 Approval of the GA Agenda**

The Chairperson asked delegates to approve the GA agenda by a show of hands which they did by a clear majority. He then proposed that he should deliver the Chairperson's Address before the coffee break with questions and answers afterwards. This was approved after some discussion.

- **9.45 – 10.45 Chairperson's Address⁴**

The Chairperson, Horacio Menones, delivered his address in Spanish. Copies in English and French were distributed in advance.

- **11.00 – 13.00 Chairperson's Address (Discussion) and Treasurer's Report⁵.**

The Chairperson's Address was discussed briefly and approved unanimously without a vote. The Treasurer, Youhanna Kamal, then delivered his report which was followed by a lengthy discussion revealing a depth of concern among GA delegates over the current financial situation in the Federation. Concern mainly focused on how the situation had deteriorated so seriously between the Montreal and Bogota GAs. The Chairperson explained how the financial problems of the WSCF had been building up over 15 years but because of the favourable external environment and the initial impact of the Centennial Fund, they had been controlled. However, since 2008, the external environment had altered radically, putting our partners under great pressure, while at the same time the level of debt from successive GAs had been building up and costs had been mounting. He further explained that radical measures had already been taken such as reducing staff in the IRO and moving the European office from Oslo to Budapest. Recent changes in partner funding schedules as well as a reduction in overall partner funding had added to financial pressures so that there is now a serious cash flow problem which will have to be addressed by cutting IRO salaries by 30%.

The seriousness of the situation gave rise to many questions and comments from the floor and a strong call for further debate which was facilitated. Discussion ended with two questions from the European region about sources of undesignated funds and the credibility of the global fundraising campaign. In reply to the first question, the Chairperson and Treasurer confirmed that the Centennial Fund was now the chief source of undesignated funding as other sources had diminished

⁴ Appendix 2 page 64

⁵ Appendix 3 page 71

as result of the global financial crisis and diminishing church attendance among our partners. In reply to the second, the Chairperson answered with a question of his own: “How can the movements support the global structure if they don’t see any added value to their own work? This has something to do with ownership, communication, leadership and our global identity. This is fundamental and until we can tackle it, we will not be able to mobilise our grassroots.”

Questions closed with a show of hands and an offer from the Chairperson and Treasurer to take further questions afterwards.

■ 14.00 – 16.30 Reports from the Regions⁶

Reports were presented by each Regional Secretary outlining the achievements – capacity building and program work in leadership training and Christian witness in situations of conflict – and challenges – eco-justice, declining numbers and advocacy for marginalised communities – experienced in the regions over the period since the Montreal General Assembly. Reports were presented and accepted from Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America/Caribbean, the Middle East and North America. Because of the pressure on the agenda, discussion of regional reports had to be curtailed. A far-reaching comment was made by the Regional Secretary for Asia Pacific when, stressing the key importance of these regional reports for WSCF, she said ‘Because we are talking about our future, results must be the most important part of our reporting.’ (See end of Report of the General Secretary below for formal receiving of these regional reports)

■ 17.00 – 20.00 and 21.00 – 22.00 Report of the General Secretary⁷

The General Secretary, Christine Housel, delivered her report which was circulated in hard copy in English, Spanish and French. Her report outlined the circumstances under which she had assumed office, her own background and her stewardship of the office of General Secretary. Her report included a robust defence of her record, a strong justification of her strategic relationship building with partners, old and new, and a warm acknowledgement of the Future of the Federation Task Group work to be presented later. She ended by outlining her vision for the future contained at the end of her report in a section titled ‘Plan’.

The General Secretary’s report caused lively debate among the delegates. Debate included both warm praise and robust questioning on various aspects. Marco Fornerone stated that he believed

⁶ Appendices 4 – 9: Africa page 82; Asia Pacific page 89; Europe page 103; Latin America/Caribbean page 108; Middle East page 115; North America page 118.

⁷ Appendix 10 page 124.

her plan for the future did not give due regard to the recommendations of the Future of the Federation Task Group whose report was the centrepiece of the GA agenda. Many delegates commented on this aspect, some agreeing and some disagreeing. After much discussion about process and the status of the General Secretary's report, the Assembly adjourned at 20.00 for dinner with an agreement to reconvene at 21.00. The Assembly reconvened at 21.00 when the convenor of the session explained that the confusion has been caused by the use of the word 'accept' and 'receive'. "Initially we talked about 'accept'. If we accept a report it would lead to action being taken on the basis of its contents. If we receive it, we can independently make a decision to implement or not implement any part of its contents. People will also have an option to have their comments noted." This clarification led to a further period of discussion during which the General Secretary made it clear that what she intended in her report was to make a recommendation rather than propose a definite plan and that her intention was not in any way to create a difficulty for the Future of the Federation Task Group. The Assembly moved to vote on a motion from the Chairperson that the General Secretary's report be received. This motion was approved by a large majority. Shantha Ready Alonso, convenor of this session, then proposed a further motion that all regional reports be received and this too was agreed.

SUNDAY 1 MARCH – Day 3

▪ 8.00 – 8.30 Worship led by the European Region

The session opened with a lively worship led by the European region which ended with an invitation for all to join in the chorus *We are Marching in the Light of God*.

▪ 8.30 – 9.30 Bible Study 3

The Rev. Dr. Dario Barolin continued to reflect on verses 4-7 from Isaiah 61 that addressed the theme of the 'outsider' and how we should treat those on the margins of our societies.

"The text makes uncomfortable reading for us because these verses tell us that the foreigners are not to receive the promise but are going to work for those who will receive the promise. We were forced to conclude that the logic of the passage is the logic of *reversion* – if I am oppressed, the only way I can imagine the end of that oppression is to become the oppressor – so violence becomes endless. We can understand this only if we understand that Isaiah was speaking to an oppressed people. So when we read this text for a people who are oppressed, they are words of hope and opportunity, but when we read it from the context of empire, it is really bad. It is good news from God for those in weakness but the opposite when addressed to those in power. This can be a stumbling block to the evangelical churches who seek biblical justification for Israel's position on Palestine. The Christian needs to go beyond this and hear the words of Jesus in St Mark, 'the first shall be last and the last shall be first'. It is always necessary to study very carefully the context of biblical quotations."

▪ 9.30 – 11.00 Keynote Address by Dr Fulata Mbanjo-Moyo

In her address on *Discovering Difference, Effecting Transformation: a post-colonial ecofeminist-ethical perspective*, Fulata gave an engaging personal perspective on working for justice between men and women in a patriarchal world of domination and violence, and how doing so can bring liberation and growth. 'In the old days, brutal strength was needed to protect communities but now we need imagination and intelligence and courage.' Questions were lively, particularly from Fulata's own region of Africa: what are the risks of change? Are there not some things we should not change? What is the difference between a feminist approach and a gender approach? Some verses in the Bible that put a man above a woman. Can you reconcile that? Her answers were equally thought-provoking:

"In *Fiddler on the Roof*, this guy says if we don't hold on to tradition we become like a fiddler on the roof. But there are some values that don't bring out the best in us Those are the values we

must crush. We must always ask who is benefiting from this system. I am not asking you to walk naked. You have the capacity of analysing the things you are holding on to and if they are not right for you, why hold on to them?"

"Gender and feminist justice are similar. They both work for power equality. The feminist approach has focused on women. Gender justice focuses on both men and women. The gender agenda can invoke positive masculinity."

"We were once praying at a Night of God. One man said. "Stop. A voice has said to me 'our prayers are not going beyond this roof because some sisters have braided hair!" You know, all religion is contextual. Sometimes our biases get in the way of our conversation with God. If it is not bringing life and love and beauty, then perhaps it is not God we are talking to."

In the exchange of question and response, she profoundly challenged the assumption that peace and justice could ever be achieved when violence against women is so pervasive in so many of our societies.

■ 11.30 – 13.30 Future of the Federation Task Group⁸ Report

Session 1 Introduction and Analysis

Shantha Ready Alonso and Marco Fornerone introduced members of the Future of the Federation Task Group and paid tribute to the work they put into analysing the crisis facing the Federation and developing the proposals for navigating a way through it as set out in the draft paper before the Assembly. Each individual member of the Task Group present then introduced themselves and made some comments about their proposals. They were Ting Jin from Malaysia, Jorge Domingues from Brazil, Salters Sterling from Ireland and Chris Ferguson from Canada. Dahlia Lakis from the Lebanon was unable to come to Bogotá. The thrust of these comments was that the proposals could not be a comprehensive response to the current crisis but that they provided an immediate response that would buy the Federation the necessary time to address the deeper crisis of its future in a global world. Chris Ferguson put it in this way:

"Do not look at this analysis as a reductionist analysis but at the same time it has to separate out the immediate, the intermediate and the longer term. We want to be inclusive and we want students to be an integral part of the long term solutions."

Delegates then divided into regional groups to which each was assigned a member of the FOF Task Group. Each group was asked to address the questions "Do you have sufficient common

⁸ Terms of Reference for the Future of the Federation Task Group, as approved by the Exco, are attached to these minutes as Appendix 11, page 139. The draft report as presented to this first session of the GA is attached as Appendix 12, page 143.

understanding of the FOF Report's analysis? And "If not, what additional information do you need?" The Assembly adjourned at 13.30.

■ 14.30 – 15.00 Chaplains

Sunday afternoon's session began with a series of announcements and welcoming introductions from the General Secretary, followed by her welcome for the chaplaincy team of 6, three men and three women, who would be providing pastoral care through English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and also Swahili, Shonu and Malawi. They introduced themselves as follows:

- Elsy Wakil of the Orthodox Youth Movement in Lebanon.
- Illari Rantakari, Lutheran lay person and student in Otaniemi 1968.
- Betsy Anderson of Toronto, Canada. Member of United Church of Canada
- Dorio Barolin. Pastor of Waldensian Church in Uruguay.
- Peniel Rufus. A priest of the Church of South India.
- Fulata Mbanu-Moyo of Malawi and a member of the World Council of Churches.

"I am here to walk the walk of companionship and compassion over the next few days" (Peniel). I am a product of the student movement. I am here to listen" (Fulata). "We are male for male and female for female but also male for female and female for male" (Elsy).

■ 15.00 – 16.30 Future of the Federation Task Group Report

Session 2 "Is there a common understanding of the analysis?"

The Future of the Federation Task Group returned to guide the plenary on the outcome of the first session. The session was chaired by Bronwyn Claire. Each region presented its questions concerning the analysis and these were recorded. Task Group representatives then responded as follows (main issues underlined):

- The Red Book was explained as an annual report on programmes and budget. It is available on the GA Dropbox and the WSCF website. The 2014 Red Book is due out in April.
- Staff Salaries: Horacio reported that IRO staff had been cut from 4 to 2.2 since the Montreal GA. Bronwyn explained the benchmarking process that had been carried out to compare IRO salaries with those in comparable institutions.
- Methodology: Marco explained how the Task Group had approached its work in the time available to it. This had included a document search of Federation reports, minutes and strategic planning documents, a questionnaire to partner movements and telephone interviews of key

personnel in these movements. Emerging patterns had been validated by conversations with staff and Exco members. Marco stressed that the Task Group was not claiming the process was comprehensive, given the limited time available to it, and would urge a more comprehensive approach, not time limited, in the future.

- The budget: Marco, Horacio, Youhanna and Bronwyn all contributed to the discussion on the budget, the deficit, the accumulated debt and the borrowings.
- Jorge Domingues explained the role of the Centennial Fund in guaranteeing the partner debt.
- Horacio explained the historical and contemporary relationship with the Ecumenical Assistance Programme.
- There was much discussion on criticisms from partners of governance and communication deficits in the WSCF and the need for training in administration skills in order to be able to meet partner requirements.
- Partners were also confused about what they saw as the polycentric nature of the WSCF – how could the regions say they represent the centre and the IRO says it represents the regions. The regions all the time are saying they represent their regions and the IRO says it represents the regions. The roles of the two levels and the relationship between them needs to be addressed urgently. Lack of clarity has led to double applications for program funding to the same donor and therefore failure.
- The session ended with a discussion on the reasons for diminished program funding in recent years. While partner's perceptions of the WSCF were important, Marco also believed it was important to understand the changed international context – declining congregations, greater emphasis on emergency funding, loss of investments in the banking collapse, greater regulation of charities, greater transparency in financial transactions – all these factors oblige the WSCF to reassess the way it relates to the world.
- There were some further questions about the meaning of a 'deficit' and a 'debt' and the difference between these terms. It was put clearly by one delegate: "a deficit is where money-in is less than money-out and a debt is money-below-zero". One delegate then asked if it was possible to sustain the Federation with its current level of debt and its cash flow problems. Youhanna answered that it was, but then asked "how long could an organisation run with no reserves?"

At this point, the discussion was adjourned and a coffee break was called.

■ 17.00 – 18.30 Future of the Federation Task Group Report

Session 3 Affirmation of the process

Upon resumption Bronwyn read chapter 4 of the report and the headings of the eight objectives of chapter 5. The Task Group representatives outlined the rationale behind the proposed process for a three stage rescue plan and then asked delegates to split into six groups to address two questions: "Do you have any questions for clarification relating to the process?" and "Do you affirm the overall direction of the process?" The Assembly divided up into mixed groups for an hour before returning to present their conclusions. Questions were raised about various aspects of the

process – when did each phase start and end, how would WSCF members be kept aware of what was happening, how would the integrity of the process be assured, what would happen if timelines slipped, how was the role of the Interim Staff Coordinator different from the role of General Secretary – but there was deemed to be sufficient agreement about the overall direction to permit the detailed consideration of the eight objectives to commence in the next session.

- **18.30 – 19.00** **Worship led by the Asia Pacific Region**

The worship led by Asia Pacific celebrated with exuberant joy the enormous diversity of the region and at the same time brought home to the GA the poverty and disempowerment of people in the Philippines in the face of climate catastrophe and inequality and the fight for justice and freedom by students in Hong Kong.

- **20.30 – 22.00** **Senior Friends Storytelling**

The WSCF Senior Friends gathered after dinner for a Storytelling session facilitated by Betsy Anderson, SCM Canada Senior Friend. Betsy invited the senior friends and students to sit in a circle and explained the significance of the Storytelling tradition – to remind the participants of the importance of their SCM experiences and inspire the students participating in the Assembly. A number of Senior Friends took turns in sharing their personal reflections, anecdotes and stories, these were; Dinesh Suna and Bishop George Coorilos, from SCM India, Florence Kanyike from Uganda, Masimba Kuchera from Zimbabwe and Felix Kokou Aklavon from Togo, Gabriela Miranda from Mexico, Salters Sterling from Ireland, Ilari Rantakari from Finland, Youhanna Kamal from Egypt, Willam Muhler from USA and Deepak Das from Bangladesh.

MONDAY 2 MARCH – Day 4

▪ 8.30 – 9.00 Worship led by the Latin America/Caribbean Region

The Latin American/Caribbean region led powerful and moving worship in which the GA were called upon to express their solidarity and support for the people of Mexico in their to get justice for the 43 missing students. “These people represent the hope of a country which is falling down. Without your support, we will lose hope. So we ask you, from Mexico, please do not leave us. If we join our hands we will succeed together.” Worship concluded with all singing *Tenemos Esperanza*.

▪ 9.00 - 9.30 Recap and Announcements

Krista provided a brief recap of Sunday’s discussions. She believed the most important thing was that we were getting to know the FOF Task Group report and reading the work they had done and coming to understand their analysis. People had a chance to ask questions about that analysis. We had morning worship and evening worship and Senior Friend storytelling.

The General Secretary outlined the 8 thematic workshops scheduled for the afternoon session and invited people to sign up for one. These covered the following areas:

- Planet change and human rights
- Rights of the people and corporations
- Student movements as political actors
- The construction of peace by interfaith dialogue and cooperation
- The Middle East and Palestine
- Colombia
- Identity, diversity and dialogue
- Water and Environmental Justice and Youth

▪ 9.30 – 11.00 Future of the Federation Task Group Report

Session 4 Discussion of Recommendations

Members of the Task Group proceeded to a detailed presentation of their recommendations. Chris Ferguson asked the GA to consider these proposals as an interlocking package in which each were interdependent on the others for success. Jorge Domingues summarised the work that would be undertaken by the proposed Transition Team over the next six months as follows:

1. Examine a new governance structure whereby the Federation leadership and Executive Committee would improve capacity and effectiveness and communication with the movements.
2. Examine management processes and procedures.
3. Examine the effectiveness of our fund-raising and resource mobilization including full transparency on resources in the regions.
4. Begin the process of transforming our culture within the Federation.
5. Strengthen our vision and identity – needs to be an ongoing process
6. Improve capacity building – includes Exco members.
7. Develop better communication – from all levels to all levels.

He stressed that all proposals will go the Exco at the end of 6 months. “They will need your endorsement and affirmation to implement the proposals. The Exco will be called to communicate with the Assembly, the Movements and the whole Federation.”

There was some further explanation of details in the proposals before two questions were put to the GA to guide their break-out group discussions:

1. Do you have any questions or clarifications on the recommendations?
2. Do you affirm the overall direction?

To this was added a further question:

3. Do you have any further suggestions to these recommendations?

There was a vigorous debate on whether to split into regional groups or mixed groups and in the end it was agreed, against the recommendations of the officers, to form regional groups. This was the third time the GA had divided for group discussion of the FOF Task Group report. The Assembly adjourned for coffee break at 10.30.

■ 11.00 – 13.30 Future of the Federation Task Group Report

Session 5 Group discussion of recommendations and plenary.

Group discussion continued for an hour and a half before all regions reported back to the plenary. Questions and comments on the Task Group recommendations were reported for each region and gathered in at the end of the session to be synthesized and responded to by the Task Group on Tuesday.

[NOTE: It became clear that delegates needed more time than was available during Assembly to consider the report in all its aspects, to consider the circumstances that had made it necessary

and to discuss it with each other in break-out sessions in which they preferred to remain within their regions and in exchanges between the regions which occurred in the plenary discussions. The Officers and Exco met frequently during mealtimes to adjust the agenda in order to facilitate more time for discussion. Members of the Task Group, together with student nominees, met during meals to synthesize the points raised in discussion, grouping similar questions together and sifting questions of fact from questions about process and yet other questions about the meaning and consequence of the recommendations. Already by this stage, the report of the Centennial Fund had been displaced by the additional time arranged for FOF Task Group sessions and was now rearranged for Tuesday afternoon following Exposure sessions.]

■ 14.30 – 15.30 Contribution to Change – Panel Presentation

Peter Prove, from the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Isaiah Toroitich from ACT Alliance and Milton Mejia from Colombia gave powerful testimony and advice on conducting ecumenical advocacy within the current global corporate, financial and political environment.

Isaiah defined advocacy as any strategic set of activities that anyone can do to influence. “It is not an elitist activity. It can be done by anyone as long as you put into effect the right tools, communication, media relations etc. – it is part of your mandate.” Peter argued forcefully for a professional approach to advocacy. “You have to be rigorous in articulating a plan and developing indicators to get you to that point. To develop a plan with clear outcomes and show how you will reach those outcomes is the *sine qua non* of fundraising.”

In discussion from the floor, delegates and speakers raised youth unemployment in response to Peter’s statement that the present financial recovery was a “jobless recovery”; the right of marginal communities to access education; resilience as empowerment for communities to influence their situations through embracing adaptability and transformation. Peter asked the Assembly not to get discouraged by a lack of funds for advocacy work. “An acute sense of injustice is something you cannot buy”.

Milton described the experience of advocacy in Latin America, how it was not enough to advocate political revolution; communities had to build self-supporting social relationships founded on justice and peace. This was happening in Colombia where, block by block, a better society was being constructed.

■ 17.30 – 19.15 Strategy Working Groups

Following a short break, the Assembly was divided into three mixed groups to address the following topics:

1. Biblical and theological analysis

2. Advocacy and solidarity
3. Diaconia and capacity development

The results of their deliberations will feed into the process of developing a new strategic plan for the Federation. What follows is a brief outline of strategies and concepts that emerged in the course of workshop debates on these issues.

A. Biblical and theological analysis

Strategies: local, regional and global

It is good to share from our own experiences when looking at our biblical and theological analysis. The Federation has been working on this and we have listened now to this panel and they have presented us with inspiration. Here we can share their different specific proposals and try to find a relationship between all those lines of action in this session.

It may be good to share how each tradition reads the Bible and expresses their unique understanding to develop a local strategy for their region

Local Strategies – Comments

- A. Comment: “In Cuba we do community readings and we start with reading into the context that we are living in. We read the passage based on where we are now. Then we also try to understand the historical context and we engage with other sources. We still try to relate it to what we are living in. For the purpose of advocacy and solidarity we try to use the Bible in an applicable way.”
- B. Comment: “In Norway we examine the text to make sure that no one is left out. We use historical critical methods and also other methods. Example: Trans-political theology, Feminist Theology, Poverty theology.”
- C. Comment: “In Australia we try to look into the context and history of the Bible. We try to read into the whole picture to get a larger view.”

Regional & Global Strategies – Comments and Responses

- A. Comment: “These strategies seem to be applicable to secular groups and aimed at them more. There was nothing special about the specific advice given in the last session and it didn’t seem theologically informed.”
- B. Response: “We are trying to follow the image of God and this is something important and unique. The way we try to stand in solidarity with one another and the “how” aspect is important, especially when looking at the “how” along with the image of God and the role of the students. This applies to our understandings of reality and theology.”

- C. Response: “The Bible can be a way to have an understanding of the truth. It is important for us to empower our students in each context. We read about it in a different way and we all have a different reality. Theology helps us have an understanding of what we are trying to do.”
- D. Comment: “The Federation has always had a role of being prophetic.. Fundamentalism and other theologies have been growing a lot. Sometimes we may feel like Elijah as if we are alone in our ways of readings. So for us, instead of hiding we should take this as a challenge to reclaim our prophetic role.”
- E. Comment: We need to have theology as a solid foundation for our work. We do good work in solidarity, but it is not always obvious that we do it from a theological foundation. One of the thoughts of the ExCo on this topic is that the times in which we practise our theology are changing.”
- F. Comment: “In Bangladesh every SCM Program requires Bible Study. We try to address the issues in our workshops and try to take enough time to contextualize the issues and see what the Bible says about them. We look at the questions and answers from both the Bible context and the context of our daily lives.”

Concepts

In academia, in PhD or ThD studies we have to include philosophical understandings. We must also include work on theory and this requires people to look deeply into their understandings. There are currently great bodies of material on these interpretations. Examples: Feminist Theology, Liberation Theology. There seems to be unanimity from Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox in how we approach critical theory.

B. Advocacy and solidarity

Advocacy and Solidarity committee – Moderator: Luciano (NA Regional Sec.)

Luciano’s presentation covered the following aspects:

Our goal is to be an advisory (not implementation) group to the WSCF that will facilitate high level engagement with the United Nations on advocacy for the poor and marginalized. WSCF has always engaged in solidarity and advocacy. It is part of our history. At a global level therefore we see our role to advocate at, for example, the UN. At a local level we should act in solidarity with the poor and marginalised through our local movements, supported by regional offices.

Since the Montreal GA, we have been:

- mobilizing internal resources and mechanisms
- Organizing training workshops and participating in advocacy for justice
- Developing committee(s) and providing support mechanisms;

- Developing strategies around solidarity;
- Reporting on the status of women, sending a delegation to the UN;
- Responding to requests from movements and regions;
- Campaigning for water justice
- Hosting Rio+20, 2012 (LAC Region)

This work has allowed us to develop networks and contacts which has informed program development and ecumenical work. Now we need your views and comments on this work and your guidance on priorities for the future. Where do we direct our scarce resources? It would seem that our work with the UN bears fruit but we need your endorsement.

Assembly Responses

- WSCF work in advocacy and solidarity: – instead of just this committee, it would be good to have a standing committee that works on reports from all regions and chapters, it would be good to have this as a standard part of SCM structure. Response: We have tried to act in this way since Montreal when we were established as a A&S Committee, hence the above report.

Question: Have you tried to communicate with political leaders (letters, etc)?

Response: In Palestine we met with local groups and exchanged thoughts and ideas but our future depends on assembly affirmations. Further actions of this kind need a mandate from this GA. In regard to the Philippines, for example, we put together a statement for 43 health workers. This was released and picked up and acted on by other actors.

Comment: Some advocacy work has been done with governments/delegations on the status of women. This was valuable as an experience but would need to be broadened into a movement wide strategy to be more effective.

Response: would be good for a group of people to examine proposals, and develop ideas for a more coherent and broader policy approach.

Comment: It is difficult for individual movements who do not, themselves, have the capacity, to reach out in solidarity on the many difficult issues that confront them. Will no solidarity come from WSCF?

Response: Regions have a place in this. Regional secretaries have all been invited to in-person meetings.

Comment: : I've been in the SCM three years and never heard about this work until I was part of my regional committee. Compared to Amnesty, we have poor structure and organisation around our advocacy role.

Response: it is good to focus on regional topics but we do need to involve our student movements more closely and inform them of this work. We are also well positioned to go to our ecumenical partners in the churches and engage with them collaboratively.

Comment: This is really important work for our SCMs, a way to have more active members.

Response: All movements received information on the A&S Committee launch in 2008. The water campaign also, all movements received information. Movements also received a questionnaire on the needs of solidarity.

Comment: Perhaps more monthly communication would be good?

The debate highlighted the challenges of advocating globally while communicating with, and being responsive to the concerns and issues confronting, local movements. How can this be done effectively with limited resources? How can it be better integrated into the global work of IRO and Regions? The debate resolved itself into three questions designed to focus minds on the future role of advocacy in the WSCF. These were:

Questions

1. What concepts can be highlighted from the presentation for this specific action line?
2. What strategies can be implemented at the local/regional/global levels?
3. What capacities at leadership and organizational levels need to be developed in order to implement these strategies?

There was some further inconclusive discussion which was brought to a close by Luciano who thanked the GA for its engagement with the issues and concluded:

- "We need a shift of gears to move forward – we've seen some examples. I imagine there could be additional reports could come from the movements. We want to receive, understand and celebrate. Do we see a sense of continuing with this work in the Federation? I believe the Federation has a huge role in advocacy and human rights. We are trying to build these networks. Does it make sense for us? If No, then we leave it. If Yes, then it becomes a part of our mission, and we must decide what do we do, what do we need, how do we become more effective? It is about a commitment to the work moving forward. It's a question of vision and our place in moving it forward. I hope for the opportunity to move forward and help in this."

C. Ecumenical Transformational Diakonia

Strategies: local and regional and global

Strategies/Local

- Informal education
- Behavioural change
- Change at the individual level

- Interpretation of the scriptures
- Live out the Gospel
- Entrepreneurship
- WSCF Hostels in every country
- Inter-regional programmes?
 - o Between two or more regions in order to move to collective action
 - o Promoting exchange between movements?
 - o Learning from each other
- Way to link: to get an idea what transformative Diakonia means
- Clarifying transformative Diakonia again
- Africa – working on transformative Diakonia:
 - o How do we empower young students?
 - o How do we work with communities to build capacity?
 - o Young students of University: can provide skills and leadership
 - o Out of movement – face challenge: movement needs to provide accomplishment entrepreneurship
- Transformative Diakonia also addresses other issues
 - o Unemployment, peace building

Global level: not talked about yet – a different contextContext is different

Conclusion: IRO to collect information on different kinds of transformative Diakonia

Concepts:

- It is the same everywhere-poverty, unemployment
- Empower individuals to get out of captivity and achieve freedom in all aspects of life
- Social, economical development
- Cultural development – how cultures live next to each other
- Prosperity is not about everyone having a lot of money but about solutions to social problems
- Growth should be shared equally
- Change of our thinking
- Diakonia is not a concept they use/ know
 - o Transformative Diakonia not known
- Development – only since 2009
- Devolvement means different things to different groups
- To develop the organization we will need to turn towards ourselves first

D. Capacity development

What capacities do we need for organizing/developing the world on local and global level?

- We are more familiar with the local level
- The knowledge that we need on the IRO / global level is different than the local. The global level has it needs, and the local level has it needs.
- We can measure the development as per each SCM level and needs.
- Capacity development is needed as follows:
 - o More members

- More widespread knowledge of the federation
- Improving our fundraising skills
- Spiritual development: bible study, get to know better our church history, our liturgy
- Improving the structure of our movement
- More sharing of experience with other denominations

All the above will result in a more developed organization with clearer goals and goal setting abilities.

Construction of knowledge and the process of the community

- The transformation of WSCF/FUMEC implies a confrontation, the confrontation creates tension, the tension creates knowledge, the kind of knowledge that allows to maintain and reform the federation.
- Intercultural Work
- Go back to the basics
- Learn doing
- Generate alliances

Future Thematic emphases

- Eco Justice: Climate Change and Human Rights
- Identity and Diversity Dialogue
- Construction Of Knowledge and The Process Of The Community

■ 19.15 – 19.30 Announcement on Exposure sessions

The Assembly reconvened briefly at 19.15 to hear the General Secretary outline logistical arrangements for the Exposure session on Tuesday when Assembly members would have a chance to experience peace building in local communities in Bogotá or in the National University.

■ 19.30 – 20.00 Worship led by the North American region

Using candles and music, the North American region created an imaginative worship based around the idea of libation and faith practices of native American peoples.

■ 21.00 – 22.30 Culture night

Each country had a table in the Auditorium on which they displayed items that portrayed or symbolized aspects of their national culture. A Cultural Presentation was organized by local host with

all the six region presenting their dances, songs, poems, stories and a display of traditional clothes. The evening was a night of fun, sharing food, and solidarity for all the delegates and participants of the Assembly.

TUESDAY 3 MARCH – Day 5.

- 8.00 – 8.30 Worship led by the Middle East Region

The Middle East region used powerpoint slides to contrast the beauty and diversity of the Middle East region with the devastation caused by war in Palestine and Syria before leading music and prayer from the Armenian, Coptic Latin and Syriac traditions.

- 8.30 – 8.35 Daily Recap

The recap of events on Monday noted the difficult struggles to come to grips with the Future of the Federation Task Group report, the challenging presentation from the partners on advocacy and the lively celebrations of nation cultures at Culture Night.

- 8.35 – 10.00 Reception of new movements

The Chairperson introduced representatives of eight associate movements seeking full affiliation with WSCF and invited them to address the Assembly in turn:

Requests for Affiliation

SCM Ireland – Rachel Power

Youth Diocese Church of Lebanon – Alexandre Roumi

Fellowship of Orthodox Youth of Poland – Marta Calpinska

Young Christians for Peace and Democracy, Georgia – presented by Annika Foltin (Germany)

Centra Ecumenica of Belarus – presented by Annika Foltin (Germany)

Palestine Youth Ecumenical Movement – Bayan Barham

Christian Youth Association of Malawi – presented by Shali Kapepo (Namibia)

SCM USA – Louis Tillman

All were accepted unanimously. The Chairperson noted that Lebanon, with more than one affiliated movement, still retains only one vote, as provided for at a previous Assembly.

Request for disaffiliation

SCM Romania requested disaffiliation but with permission to remain associated with WSCF. Lucien Cirlan explained that the Romanian movement wished to avoid conflict with local church leadership. A vote was taken – 57 in favour; 1 against; 6 abstentions. Motion carried.

■ 10.00 – 10.30 Introduction to Exposure

The Chairman introduced the Exposure Program and urged all GA members to participate in one of three visits being arranged to different centres in Bogota. The purpose of the visits was to give members of the GA the opportunity to encounter first-hand the experiences of the Colombian people affected by conflict and see a number of peacebuilding initiatives that were taking place in different areas of the city and at different social and educational levels. Participants visited, met with and listened to young people in schools and other centres around Bogota where peacebuilding initiatives were taking place. These were in Bemposta, Bosa and the Universidad Nacional. A final Exposure was organized at the Centro de Memoria Paz y Reconciliacion where participants met the leaders of people's organizations involved in the Colombia peace procedure. A short account of the visit to Bosa follows by way of example.

■ 10.30 – 16.00 Exposure Visits

Exemplar Exposure visit to Bosa

A group of 30 GA members visited *Colegio Claretiano el Libertador*, a second level school in Bosa. The visit began with a warm welcome from students and their teachers and a performance of music from the younger pupils. This was followed by a lengthy question and answer session in which pupils and teachers told us about their work in building peace through learning to express different opinions to each other in respect and knowledge of the causes of conflict. The pupils showed a keen political understanding of the violence in their country. "In order to change the conditions in our country, it is necessary first to know our history, secondly it is important to organize each other, thirdly it is important that we see each other as brother and sister and fourthly we must see that capitalism is not the answer for human beings." Members of the GA asked many questions and some were able to identify with these young people from their own experiences in their own countries in Africa and Asia. After sharing their lunch with the pupils and visiting an exhibition of memorials to those connected to the school who had died during the violence, the visitors heard testimony from Señora Carmensa, whose two sons had been killed by the military on the pretence that they were fighting the guerrillas - "Why are they dressing children as guerrillas to keep up their statistics?" The afternoon finished with farewell speeches in the assembly hall and an impromptu pop concert and dance led by the school pop band. At the end of the visit, GA members contributed to a fund to enable Señora Carmensa to bury her two sons. There

was a strong feeling among the visitors that we had experienced real contact with the people of this school in an area of the city only two steps removed from misery.

The visit to Bosa was followed by a visit to *Justapaz*, the Christian Centre for Justice, Peace and Non-violent Action run by the Menonite Church in Colombia, based in Bogotá not far from the YMCA conference centre. This organization arose out of the new Constitution of Colombia agreed in 1990 which provided for freedom of religion and conscience. This allowed the Menonite Church in Colombia to contribute to peace building in Colombia by working to:

- Stop violence,
- Eliminate the causes of violence,
- Vindicate the rights of victims,
- Transform the perpetrators, and thus
- Affirm that a dignified life can be a reality.

These five principles arose out of living in and with conflict. *Justapaz* is now working on a five year strategic plan that provides for:

- Capacity building,
- Investigation and communication,
- Non-violence and action for justice including conscientious objection,
- Institutional services, and
- Participation in active citizenship.

An annual report that documents all instances of violence is produced and congregations are trained in providing support to victims.

■ 16.30 – 17.00 Report of the Centennial Fund⁹

Salters Sterling, Jorge Domingues and Youhanna Kamal described the work of the Centennial Fund and the legal constraints imposed by the charity laws of Switzerland. They explained how it had been established in 1990 as a vehicle through which Senior Friends could support the Federation by fundraising and direct contributions. Its current chair was A. J. Finlay from Canada. It met once a year in Geneva and used Skype at other times to maintain contact. By 1994 it had raised 100,000 US dollars. It is required to maintain a capital endowment of 1 million US dollars and is

⁹ Appendix 13, page 154

permitted to make grants from any surplus. The return from the investments is used to support the WSCF. It does not support any other organization. Its first grant to WSCF was made in 2004 towards the cost of the Chiang Mai General Assembly in Thailand and it has supported each GA since then (Montreal 2008 and Bogotá 2015). Part of the build-up of debt has been the cost of successive GAs. The CF also makes an annual grant to support staffing costs of the IRO. The Treasurer of the Federation is also ex officio a member of the CF board so the CF Board considers the finances of both at the same time to the benefit of both. The average return on investments has been 6.6% over the past 20 years. In that time, it has contributed almost 1 million dollars to the WSCF. In the past year, it has contributed \$30,000 to IRO salaries and \$70,000 to the GA. The fund has also underwritten the debt to the WCC and will repay \$200,000 by the end of 2015 if WSCF is no longer able to make its monthly repayments.

Because of pressure on time, and the need to conclude discussion of the FOF Task Group report, there was little time for questions. Representatives of the CF nevertheless commended the value of the fund to the Assembly, stressing that its function was to support the WSCF and not in any way to control or influence its vision or direction. They asked the delegates to bear it in mind in their further deliberations of the Task Group report.

▪ 17.30 – 18.30 Future of the Federation Task Group report

Session 6 Response to questions from regional groups

Members of the Task Group returned to the Assembly to answer questions from the previous group session which had been gathered into different categories and circulated to the Assembly in English, Spanish and French. Salters Sterling and Jorge Domingues assisted Marco and Horacio in presenting and responding to the questions grouped as follows:

A - Timeframe

B – Composition of Transition Team

C – Structure

D – Funding, Staff and Training

E – Language confusion

F – Centennial Fund

G – Process

The Assembly decided mid-way through the session that it wished to consider whether this process was the most appropriate one to use. Some wished to discuss the answers immediately in plenary, others wished to break into groups, and yet others wished to see the answers in writing so they could compare and consider them alongside the document itself. It was agreed that an *ad hoc* synthesis group should be formed of Task Group members with two Assembly nominees to clarify questions and proposals emerging from the Assembly and reflect them back under three headings – those coherent with the general direction of the FOF report, those contra to it, and those contradictory to it for constitutional, legal or administrative reasons. It was further agreed

that this group would produce a written document of questions and answers for tomorrow's session.

- **19.00 – 19.30 Worship led by the European region**

The European region led a meditative worship that, using Taize music, Orthodox music and candles, pondered the mystery of God. "God is neither male nor female, She is God, mother, sister, brother..."

- **21.00 – 22.00 A Talking Circle**

In response to her experience of the debate on the Future of the Federation Task Group report that had taken place up to this moment, Amy Blythe offered to lead a Talking Circle for any member of the GA who wished to join. She explained that this was a feature of native American Indian culture which was used for discussing important and difficult issues. A stone was passed around from person to person and the person holding the stone had the opportunity of talking while others listened respectfully. The stone became not just the invitation to speak and be listened to but also the catalyst for an idea or thought. In this way, a space was offered to GA members to express feelings engendered by the intense pressures of the preceding days. It came from deep within an ancient culture and worked its effect on the small number who chose to come.

Wednesday 4 March – day 6

▪ 8.30 – 9.30 Bible Study 4

The Rev. Dario Barolin completed his reflections on the Prophet Isaiah and how his message challenges Christians to examine the relevance of his words to our global society today, to consider the position of marginalized peoples in that society and, in particular, for members of WSCF to witness to the love of God in our generation and be effective advocates for justice and peace in our communities.

▪ 9.45 – 10.30 Gathering at the Peace and Reconciliation Centre in Bogotá

Assembly members gathered at the Peace and Reconciliation Centre to hear an address by Senator Ivan Sepeda and shared their experiences of Exposure events. At the Centre, the participants listened to the presentation of its Director, giving an overview of the history and significance of the Centre in the peace advocacy of Colombia. Leaders of people's organization and peace advocates shared their experiences in peace building and engaged the participants in a dialogue. SCM delegates from each region were invited to react on the presentations of the speakers and shared their own peace-building activities in the national movements.

▪ 11.00 – 12.30 Future of the Federation Task Group Report Session 7 Written answers to questions and suggested changes

The Assembly received the FOF Task Group's written answers to questions in three languages dated 3rd March 2015, as requested on Tuesday evening. The Assembly divided once again into regional groups to consider these answers side by side with the draft FOF report and come forward with suggested recommendations. These were passed on to the synthesis committee who worked to incorporate them into the final report over lunchtime and into the afternoon. All recommendations were considered. Some were not incorporated in the final draft because:

- They were in contradiction to others.
- They had constitutions or legal implications, or
- They were impractical.

These were placed in an appendix and brought to the next session along with the final draft report that included all recommendations that did not fall into any of the above three categories. These were underlined to highlight them in the text of the final draft.

- 16.30 – 18.45 Future of the Federation Task Group Report

Session 8 Debate on voting procedure

The final draft FOF report was circulated to delegates in the three languages of the GA, English, Spanish and French. The Chairperson began a roll call in preparation for a vote. Conscious of the seriousness of the coming vote, delegates began a long and difficult debate on who was entitled to vote and how many votes would be cast. Part of the debate involved a questioning of previous votes, particularly those concerning the approval of proxies for three new affiliated movements, Malawi, Bangladesh and Georgia, and the consequent increase in the voting number. Some members became distressed at the apparent lack of progress and the advancing time pressures. At 18.45, the Chairperson called a fifteen minute adjournment. At 19.00 the GA reassembled. A motion was put to the floor and seconded that the proxies for Malawi and Bangladesh be confirmed by virtue of the clear majority show of hands in their favour on Tuesday and that the GA agreed to vote again that Georgia's vote should be exercised by the delegate from Slovakia. This was agreed. A roll call was taken. 69 + the Chairperson came to 70 and therefore votes required to approve the motion were 36. A proposer and seconder stood up from the floor and the vote was taken. The motion was passed by 42 in favour. The Assembly then adjourned for dinner to be followed by worship

- 20.30 – 21.00 Worship led by the Africa region

The Africa region provided a wonderful occasion of worship that was both deeply spiritual and infectious musical. It provided a moment of real release from the stressful debates that had gone before.

- 21.00 – 23.15 Future of the Federation Task Group Report

Session 9 Consideration of the final Report¹⁰, with amendments

This session began with roll call which confirmed 70 voting delegates, including the Chairperson. Votes to pass. 36.

The final draft report, dated 4.3.2015 was tabled. The Chairperson explained that the synthesis team had taken the proposals from the regional groups and integrated almost all of them into the tabled draft. Those that had not been included were listed as an appendix (which was read out to

¹⁰ The final report, as approved by the GA, with changes highlighted, is attached as Appendix 14 page 155.

the delegates by the General Secretary later in this session). He further noted that the synthesis team included a number of regional representatives and himself. All changes, including additions, deletions and text moved from one position to another were underlined. He then proceeded to read the changes, taking comments from the floor as he went through them.

Change 1. Immediate, point 4, page 3

The interim staff coordinator should work with a management group of five six members – the Chair, the Treasurer, a two students and two Senior Friends, one of whom shall be a member of the Centennial Fund. Each region shall nominate one or two student candidates to a pool from which the ExCo shall appoint two (1 male and 1 female), taking into account expertise and experience (LA/C; AP & E)

Change 2. Immediate, points 8, 9, and 10, page 3

Items were moved from the next two years and now they are put into the immediate measures. This change was proposed by the Africa region.

1. Develop agreed Job Descriptions for all WSCF staff, especially for the General Secretary [A]. Roles and responsibilities of all staff must be clear. [moved from Objective 7 to “Intermediate” (A)]
2. Agree a common template for reporting (narrative and financial). [moved from Objective 3 (A)]
3. Agree frequency of reporting. For example, there should be a quarterly financial report and a quarterly operational report, using the common templates to capture the main events, numbers, dates, challenges and future plans. These quarterly reports will form the basis of a comprehensive annual report for donors, partners and SCMs. [moved from Objective 3 (A)]

Change 3. Inter mediate. Pages 4 and 5

These are all additions, proposed by different regions.

- 3.a. Governance structure and constitution, including a study of the size of the ExCo [E].
- 3.c. Fundraising and resource mobilization (EAP, grassroots campaign (\$1), fundraising protocol, develop a “case for support” that clarifies the vision and goals, tells the story of the Federation and the impact it has made to young people, communities, the academic community and the church, including sale of products in the context of a non-profit making organization.[A]
- 3.g. Communication (The website would provide information on work of the Transition Team) [A/P]

4. The Transition team will report in this way: [AP & LA/C]

- i. To the Exco, at the end of the first month.
- ii. To the SCMs, a progress report at the end of 3 months.
- iii. To the Exco, a final report on actions and recommendations

5. The duration of the transition should be six months, extended to nine months if needed, and a decision on the extension be made in the fifth month [ME & NA]

Change 4. Measures necessary in the two years.

Objective 2: Reform of governance structure and constitution. Page 6. The following sentence was added at the end of this objective:

These proposals may require action that requires constitutional change. In such a case, the Exco will develop and conduct a process in consultation with the SCMs [ME]

Objective 6: Increase the income of the WSCF (IRO and Regional). Page 7, Second bullet; the underlined phrase was added.

- Collect membership fees from all SCMs every year (during one of the events in each region or by bank transfer with proof of payment)[E].

Fifth bullet; the underlined phrase replaced the deleted phrase.

- Strengthen the *Be One, Give One* campaign, taking into account the lessons learnt, for instance, allow regions to modify the global campaign according to their needs, contexts and possibilities. [E] ~~from the first launch and utilize the serious commitment of RSs in mobilizing people to donate.~~

Change 5. Additional objective

Objective 9, incorporating a number of different suggestions, was added. Page 9.

Objective 9: Implement a process to consider the move of the IRO, or, to relocate the Inter Regional staff to a more cost efficient location. This should be initiated by the ExCo immediately and be completed in the next two years.

- Cheaper city [AP & E]

- A country where the movement is strong [AP]
- Visa and work permits easily obtainable [AP]
- Strong partner(s) and church relationship(s) [AP]
- Consider office affiliations related to Geneva, e.g. Middle East [AP]
- Consider a global south location [E]

The Appendix of rejected proposals was then read from the screen by the General Secretary as follows:

“All recommendations were considered. Some were not incorporated in the final document because:

- They were in contradiction to others.
- They had constitutional or legal implications
- They were impractical.

Middle East

- Have a student and proxy on Transition Team - having at least an MBA
- Establish regional follow up committees to coordinate with Transition Team.
- The regional committees can vote on the changes to the constitution recommended by the Transition Team.
- The roles of regional committees with the Transition Team should be well defined.

Europe

- Develop and agree global and regional goals – we agree unless it means the change in that SCMs select their regional goals.

Africa

- The Coordinator, after six months, if he/she had good results or done well, we can confirm him/her to the General Secretary post.
- The GA should have power of electing many members of the interim and management teams, regional balance in the management team, the appointed people should have experience.

North America

- There should be space needed to spread the recommendation from one to two months for flexibility.

- Remove the Senior Friend from the Centennial Fund because the Treasurer is a member is ex officio, simplifying the team to make decisions
- The *Be One, Give One* campaign should be for the greater work of the WSCF.
- The Transition Team should be transparent with the financial team to bring up all finances budgets, audit reports, budgets.

Asia Pacific

- Analysis team to support the Transition Team in providing the in depth analysis.
- GA should elect student nominees to Transition Team.
- Area to be considered/evaluated in study of the relations with partners /partners/Senior Friends.”

The Chairperson proceeded to invite questions and comments from the floor.

First round of questions

Q: How will constitutional changes be implemented in the next two years because only the GA that can approve constitutional change?

A: The Exco will research mechanisms to respect the GA’s role to approve any constitutional change proposals that emerge.

Q: Norway is concerned about bankruptcy and would like to see the regional offices and IRO share one global office in the South.

A: Norway’s views are embraced in Objective 9: To analyse regional and inter regional offices. This is too complex and important to be decided without a detailed analysis.

Q: The English version of the document states that there will be two Senior Friends, of which one will be from the Centennial Fund. Surely this is not correct?

A: The Centennial Fund shall nominate one of its number to the Transition Team. The Exco shall nominate a Senior Friend. (Some members of the GA wanted to require the CF member to be a student but this was not supported by the GA as a whole.)

Q: How was regional balance addressed in the composition of the Transition Team?

A: Regional balance was not considered. What was added was gender balance and expertise, not necessarily regional balance.

Q: The Exco is too large. It should be reduced to less than 10 members.

A: Reducing the Exco to less than 10 would require constitutional change. This is why we put in 3a, to include a study of the size of the Exco.

Comment: Intermediate 4, Point ii. A progress report at the end of 3 months. NA asked for financial transparency to SCMs. We need a financial report as well. Please note this in the minutes.

A: We could add progress report with financial report. In the Spanish version it says the Transition Team will present in this way. In English it needs to be redrafted to read "Presents narrative and financial...".

Comment: We need to have one terminology which should be "Transition Team". Agreed.

Q: Why is the Centennial Fund participating in the Transition Team?

A: The Centennial Fund is contributing to this GA and to the budget. That is why we should invite them. They are the anchor supporter of the WSCF.

Comment: When we were talking about the increase from 5 to 6 on the TT earlier, we the people from the FOF were happy one extra person would not slow down the work and would also increase student participation.

Second round of questions

Q: Intermediate point 2 states "Hire an interim staff coordinator, agree on a job description and develop a 6-month work plan with clear timelines". We need to develop the job description in the immediate phase, and then hire the interim coordinator.

A: Yes, this is correct. One of the urgent tasks for the new Exco will be to work on a Job Description for the ISC right away.

Third round of questions

Q.a: If monthly reporting is too much, how will we know that the Transition Team is on track during this critical six month period?

Q.b: I would also have a concern about moving the IRO location. We should remember we are an organization with a culture. It is what holds us together. I have seen multinationals moving their headquarters and it always ends in disaster. Maybe we should look at that.

Comment: In Latin America, we have a concern about the sentence "collect membership fees from all SCMs once a year". The Exco have to consider the context of each SCM. This would be very different for my region.

Q: On the Africa region proposal that if the ISC does well, can he or she not become the General Secretary – why is this proposal not included?

A: Because the ISC and GS will be two different jobs. Of course the ISC can apply for the GS position at the end of six months but we did not include this because it is pre-determining the outcome of the program. Maybe there will not be a GS post any more.

Comment: I would like to be sure that we will receive these reports from the Transition Team in three languages.

Q: I am afraid you are repeating the mistake of the past by putting the whole onus on the ISC?

A: There is a big responsibility on the ISE yes, but he or she will be supported to a greater extent by the Transition Team.

After some further questions which began to repeat what had already been asked, the Chairman moved that the vote be taken on whether or not to approve the document as amended with suggestions from the GA. The Latin American/Caribbean region wished to vote for each recommendation separately but the Chairperson ruled this out, reminding delegates of the process that had taken place, of the discussions and clarifications and proposals that had developed over the last number of days, and that it was the rescue program as a whole, as discussed and amended by the GA, that should now be put to a vote. If approved, it would become a working document for the Exco.

After further debate on the voting procedure, delegates were asked to vote by a show of hands on whether to approve the document as a whole or whether to vote on the amendments point by point. A majority show of hands favoured voting for the document as a whole, which therefore took place.

Delegates were therefore asked to approve the amended report dated 4.3.2015 as a whole. When the votes were counted, the document was approved by 50 votes to 16. The session ended at 23.15.

THURSDAY 5 MARCH – Day 7

▪ 8.30 – 9.30: Bible Study 5

The final bible study was led by Rev. Gloria Ullua from Colombia who explored the portrayal of women in the bible, frequently identified with prostitutes, sorceresses, whores and adulterers. Using Isaiah 57 vs 3 and vs 6 – 9, she showed how Jewish religion was based on patriarchy in contrast to the religions of Canaan where many gods were female and associated with fertility. Referring to many of the books we do not normally read (because they do not show Jehovah in a good light), books like Ruth, Esther, Lamentations, Judges, Jeremiah, she showed how women had been excluded in the prophetic tradition while in the indigenous religions, they took a full part. She called upon us to understand and respect other religions.

“Today when we are talking about inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, you need to give back to women their dignity and integrity. These practices have led to divisions. I am calling you to become inclusive. Usually, we don't read these books because they do not say good things about Jehovah. In the Colombian context, we have studies of many of such books – Judges – they use women as metaphors. To be naked with sexual harassment. Remember what happened in Rwanda. In order to make the honour of a group, they raped women. This is still happening today. The Catholic Church has said the church is the Mother. In the Jewish traditions, Jerusalem is the Bride adorned for the Bridegroom. I call on you all to give back to women their rightful place in our faith.”

▪ 9.30 – 10.30 Roll Call

In preparation for the report of the Search Committee and voting for new officers and Exco, the Chairperson presented some correspondence from two absent movements seeking to be represented by other movements who were present – Zimbabwe by Rwanda and South Sudan by Ghana. After these were accepted, the result of the roll call was a total of 73 voting members of whom 58 were present in the room. Number of votes for a majority is 37.

Before proceeding with the report of the Search Committee, a delegate called for the Assembly to move to a closed session, excluding all non-voting members. This was supported by a delegate from Sri Lanka who at this point made an accusation of harassment by a Senior Friend earlier in the week. Two of the Chaplains addressed the Assembly, saying it was not good to have an accusation made from the floor that someone was threatened by a Senior Friend so during the break they proposed to talk to the delegate making the accusation and anybody else who feels likewise and then take action about that. This was agreed. It was then resolved to proceed to exclude all but voting delegates, contact movement delegates and ex-officials of Exco.

▪ 10.30 – 14.30 Report of the Search Committee¹¹ and Election of Officers

Yong Ting Jin (Malaysia), chairperson of the Search Committee, reported to the Assembly on behalf of her colleague members of the Committee – Annika Foltin (Germany), Florence Kanyike (Uganda), Linwood Blizzard (USA), Yarkus Perez (Chile), Youhanna Kamal (Egypt). The Assembly noted a particular difficulty in eliciting female applicants for the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Following a number of withdrawals and a second call for applicants, she reported that the five candidates had been shortlisted, one (male) for the position of Chairperson, two (both male) for the position of Vice Chairperson and two (one male and one female) for the position of Treasurer. Because of the specific constitutional requirement to have a male and a female Vice Chairperson, the GA were being asked to elect a Chairperson, a male Vice Chairperson, and a Treasurer, the position of female Vice Chairperson remaining unfilled because the lack of any candidate.

Election Candidates

The candidates for election were as follows:

- Chairperson – one candidate, Marco Fornerone, Italy.
- Male Vice Chairperson – two candidates, Immanuel Kitnan (Sri Lanka) and Masimba Kuchera (Zimbabwe).
- Treasurer – two candidates, Bronwyn Claire (Australia), Felix Kokou Aklavon (Togo).

Each candidate was asked to circulate a statement of their vision and priorities and to address the Assembly for ten minutes and answer questions.

Chaplains defer their report

Before voting took place, the Chaplains were invited to report to the Assembly on their enquiries and discussions on the alleged harassment. Betsy Anderson, speaking for the six Chaplains, asked that Senior Friends be permitted back into the hall so that both parties to the dispute could be present to hear their report. The Chairperson pointed out that a 2/3 majority (49 votes) would be required to reverse the earlier decision. The delegate from Namibia proposed a motion to end the closed session, seconded by a delegate from Egypt. 30 voted in favour. The motion was defeated. The Chaplains decided to defer their report till after the vote.

Ballot papers were distributed and voting began for the positions of Chairperson, male Vice Chairperson and Treasurer.

¹¹ Appendix 15, page 163.

Election of Officers

Chairperson

Marco Fornerone: 33 in favour; 37 against; 2 abstentions.
No Chairperson is elected.

Male Vice Chairperson

Immanuel Kitnan: 38 in favour; Masimba Kuchera: 30 in favour: Abstentions 4.
Immanuel Kitnan is elected.

Treasurer

Bronwyn Claire: 49 in favour; Felix Aklavon: 21 in favour; Abstentions 1.
Bronwyn Claire is elected.

Election of the Executive Committee

The Assembly proceeded to the election of the new Executive Committee to hold office until the next General Assembly.

Candidates for election briefly addressed the Assembly. They were:

Oscar Eduardo Reicher Salazar (Chile)

Dianet Martinez Valdez Cuba

Dany El Obeid (Lebanon)

Marianna Azer (Egypt)

Fanny Chung (Hong Kong)

John Gravestone (New Zealand)

Brandi Thorpe Friesen (Canada)

Louise Tillman (USA)

Paul Martin Nguimgo (Cameroon)

Lydia Nabunya (Uganda)

Annika Foltin (Austria)

Valentin Tranchand (Germany)

All were elected unanimously with a strong show of hands. The closed session was declared over and the Assembly adjourned for lunch at 14.30.

- 15.30 – 16.00 Group Photograph

GA delegates, Senior Friends, Partners and Support staff gathered for the group photographs taken by Michael Garcia, Senior Friend from the Philippines.

- 16.30 – 17.30 Report from the Chaplains on the Allegation of Harassment

The Chaplains addressed the Assembly on the outcome of their attempts to reconcile the complaint against the Senior Friend. The substance of their report was that, having listened to all, they did not believe the incident represented a general culture among the Senior Friends and they noted the allegation was actually rejected by the other party. They remarked on the importance of “knowing the power implications of our interventions” because the allegation was made in a plenary in a highly charged atmosphere prior to an election. They regretted that their earlier attempts to bring about a reconciliation between the two individuals had failed and that the decision to exclude the Senior Friends from the morning session had meant they had not been able to make their report to the full Assembly prior to the elections.

This generated much debate in the Assembly with some delegates supporting the stand taken by the complainant and the motion from the delegate from USA to create “a safe democratic space” for the elections to take place. Others felt the Senior Friends had been treated with disrespect and yet others called for forgiveness and repentance and a healing of the hurt so that the Assembly could move on.

- 17.30 – 19.00 Resolutions on Palestine and Identity, Diversity and Dialogue (IDD)

Position Paper on Palestine¹²

This paper was introduced by the delegate from Palestine, supported by the Middle East region. Maps showing the steady shrinking of Palestinian land over the past 50 years were shown on the large screen and the harsh conditions of everyday life for the Palestinian people, conditions resulting from war, economic oppression, legal and bureaucratic oppression and dispossession of land and housing. An Indian Senior Friend asked that the issue of water justice also be included in the paper. Delegates expressed their strong solidarity and the position paper was adopted

¹² Appendix 16 page 172.

unanimously. The Middle East region expressed its warmest thanks to the GA and invited WSCF members to come and see for themselves.

Paper on Identity, Diversity and Dialogue¹³

The North American regional secretary introduced this paper in his capacity as chairperson of the working group that had prepared it. This issue has been a leading issue for the Federation, one with differing views from the different regions and differences between theological and biblical perspectives, but, as the General Secretary said, “if we are advocating at a global level, either in public statements, or deeper at UN level, we need a mandate to make this affirmation a global issue. There was a sense in the GA that if it is to continue this work in a very serious way, then the views of all regions must be brought to bear upon it. After this general introduction and expression of views, the issue was adjourned so that representatives of the Mayor of Bogotá could address the Assembly.

■ **19.00 – 19.30 Address from Representatives of the Mayor of Bogotá**

The Rev. Luis Fernando de San Miguel, President of WSCF in Colombia, introduced Lina, who spoke to the Federation on behalf of the Mayor of Bogotá, Señor Gustavo Pedro. She welcomed the WSCF General Assembly to Bogota and expressed the gratitude of the Mayor in being permitted to host this international and ecumenical body. She paid tribute to the Churches in Colombia and their active support for peace building in urban and rural settings. She outlined three projects aimed at reducing poverty in Bogota – Education rights, Ecology and Non-segregation – and taking the young people out of the war.

Next to speak was Dr Carmina who headed the local organizing committee who had put so much work into preparing for their international guests. She thanked the GA for their warm welcome and spoke about the youth and their role in building peace.

■ **19.30 – 20.30 Final Worship led by the six regional secretaries**

The six regional secretaries led a combined final worship built around a theme of global unity in worship, illustrated by the lighting of candles in a circle with everyone joining in music and song. “O lord come now and join us here we ask you to come and give us cheer”.

Fulata Moyo then spoke movingly about the time she went to hear the stories of girls trapped in human sex slavery.

¹³ Appendix 17 page 179.

“One day one of the middle men flashed a menu on what sex did we want to see. I was silent as we walked back to the hotel. So my friend asked me ‘what are you feeling, what did you see, what did you think?’ I had to answer because I needed to speak. So I said ‘actually I saw the face of Jesus in those girls, I saw his tears in their eyes and heard him looking at me and saying - Do you have good news for me? - I went there to hear their stories and I saw the face of Jesus. It was not a comfortable place but I was in the right place.’ My friend asked me again ‘why are you thinking like that?’ All the time I was talking to them, I was seeing the older women who were no longer sexually attractive and had to use the young women to survive. I was crying when I said ‘It could have been me’ Why did I have to make choices that were so easy? Jesus after he was baptized by John said ‘God has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor ...’. He was speaking knowing that what was waiting for him was not going to be easy. He knew he was facing an empire of oppression. And he knew when the good news was preached to the poor, they could not afford it because they could not pay for it. Their religion oppressed them with rule after rule. Go out there brothers and sisters and proclaim the Good News. We have bonded, we have established new relations, we have influenced each other in many ways. We have also hurt one another. But it is not the end of the world. When we proclaim the Good News, we do not know what is good news to others. To those women, it was not good news to tell them they had sinned. They had been soiled by exploitation. So if I was to bring Good News for them, I had to listen to them and feel their pain. So as you go, remember that the Good News will be Good News if you know what the questions are; but be assured that the spirit of the Lord is upon you, the spirit of God that penetrates deeply. If you do not have compassion for people then don’t go to them; they are already condemned enough. The student movement has brought great life to people. All you are in leadership in a way, so when you go out there, compassion is the basic, basic, basic foundation where you can start from. Because God came down in compassion. I want to end by calling each one of you to take time as you transit – this is a transition period, and transition time is a very vulnerable time. You do not belong to the past or to the future. It is a time of vulnerability. So take time to think about it on your way home. What kind of Good News you are carrying? Who are you caring about? If you are only caring about yourselves, then I suggest to you that you need to get in touch with your God and think about what you are doing for him.”

The session closed with delegates holding hands and “Marching to the Light of God”!

■ 22.00 – Identity, Diversity and Dialogue, continued.

The Assembly reconvened to complete its consideration of the IDD paper. The session was chaired by Bronwyn Claire. The following amendments were proposed and agreed.

1. Motion: bullet 3 “Advocate for basic human rights ... on a global level, e.g. at the UN” to be copied to the recommendation section. 37 in favour. Motion passed.

2. Motion to remove the word “same” on p.4, second word of Recommendation 1.

60 in favour. Motion passed.

The delegate from Namibia expressed concern about recommendation 2 “All levels of the Federation commit to engage in this process” as he believed it would be unfair to make it binding on all. In clarification, it was stated that this is a framework document rather than a policy statement and as such is not binding on all regions. Other points of concern relating to details in the document were raised by a small number of delegates but these were not formulated into motions. Finally the document as amended by motions 1 and 2 above was approved by a large majority and the 35th General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation in Bogotá came to a close.



PART II APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Opening Plenary Address by Professor Johnston McMaster

We Are Many, We Are One: Sent Out to Build God's Peace

Diversity and unity are not opposites. They are two sides of the coin. I don't think a meter of topsoil, a few centimetres deep, is any different in Colombia from Ireland. Put under a microscope, we begin to see that there are at least 1500 living forms, not to mention millions of smaller organisms. We are looking at mind-blowing diversity and yet all of the organisms are interdependent. Destroy or eliminate one and the entire balance is upset. The chain of interdependence is diminished. In that square foot of topsoil there is incredible diversity and incredible unity, a unity that expresses itself in interdependence. Our awareness of ecological systems, how the world is, has suggested to us that diversity in unity and unity in diversity are constitutive of the universe. The very constitution of things is diversity in unity and unity in diversity and interdependence is key to ecological relationships and eco-human relationships. Animate and inanimate nature seems to recognise these things. It is we humans who have the difficulty. We do not seem to be able to organize power relations without the relations becoming skewed; when power is in the hands of an elite and power relations become a domination system, exploitative, oppressive, unjust and abusive. Grabbing power over, power as domination, power as oppressive and abusive of others is an interpersonal experience, and organizational, institutional, national and international experiences. We have major difficulties with structures and systems of power. The ethics of power, therefore, are crucial, not least when we try to acknowledge our plurality and our oneness, our being many yet one, our diversity and our unity, unity and diversity, and the fundamental reality of the interdependence of all things and all people. We may need to keep this in the front of our intellectual, emotional and spiritual intelligences as we explore being sent out to build God's peace.

I would like to explore this part of our theme under three headings:

God in a post-colonial world of violence

Just Peacebuilding

Peace as a sacred and interreligious vocation

God in a Post-Colonial World of Violence

The good news is that war between nations, international war is on the decline. The graph has been dipping. Steven Pinker, the Harvard Psychologist has suggested that we may be '*living in the most peaceable era of our species existence*'.¹ He does suggest in his 841 page tome that he at times does adopt a voice that is irreverent, because he thinks that the analysis of violence and war has '*inspired too much piety and*

not enough understanding'.² The irreverence may cause him to be somewhat too optimistic and he is in love with the ideals of modernity, progress and enlightenment. When he comes to dealing with violence in the Bible, he may have fallen into his own criticism, too much piety and not enough understanding. It is less about piety and more about a decontextualized approach to the biblical text and therefore, not enough depth understanding. But let's not be too critical of Pinker when he moves out of his psychological zone into the unfamiliar territory of biblical hermeneutics. He is pointing up some real trends. Since the end of the Second World War there has been historically unprecedented development: *'the great powers and developed states in general, have stopped waging war on one another'*. Historians now talk of the Long Peace. Then there was the end of the Cold War in 1989 and since then 'organised conflicts of all kinds-even wars, genocides, repression by aristocratic governments, and terrorist attacks-have declined throughout the world'. Pinker calls this the New Peace. A final trend he sees in the post-war era inaugurated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He points to a growing revulsion against aggression on smaller scales, *'including violence against ethnic minorities, women, children, homosexuals, and animals'*. We have had civil rights, women's rights, children's rights, gay rights and animal rights through what Pinker describes as a *'cascade of movements from the late 1950s to the present day'*, which he calls the Rights Revolutions.³ Part of Pinker's argument is that because of the Long Peace, the New Peace and the Rights Revolutions, we are in a safer world now, a more peaceful era. The title of his book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, some may find a little too optimistic about humans and the future.

International war has declined, the states that are largely committed to democracy do not generally go to war with each other. Whatever weaknesses and flaws people see in the European Union, it is a remarkable project in conflict transformation, reconciliation and peacebuilding. Europe is at peace now in a way that it has not been for centuries. But it was the 20th century's dark continent and Eurocentrism is receding in a more globalized world. A continent whose then great powers dominated 85% of the planet has lived through the collapse of its imperial power, the end of its empires, which like all empires in human history, had feet of clay and the seeds of their own destruction within them. European hegemony has gone, but then there will be China, and India and Brazil may become economic superpowers. It may well be that hegemons come and go and are replaced by other hegemons. Power over and power as domination is a perennial human problem.

There are a few other hopeful signs. After World War II and up to 1974 violent conflicts came to an end with victory for one side or the other. After 1974 violent conflicts have been ended through negotiation. We might be learning something though too many negotiated settlements have broken down.

Whatever about the decline in inter-state war there are still too many intra-state violent conflicts. There has never been a declared cease-fire or end of war in the Korean peninsula. The first decade of this century has given us the military disasters of Afghanistan and Iraq. The international community has really no idea what to do about Syria and many will say there is a lack of moral courage on the part of the US and Europe in relation to the seemingly intractable problem of Israel/Palestine*. Much of the Near East or Middle East, depending on your geography and perhaps ideology, is a tinderbox, naming only Lebanon, Yemen and Egypt. Many thought the Arab Spring was going to be another European 1989, a non-violent move, even leap towards democracy and human rights and freedoms. But it wasn't and the outcome is still unclear and tense. Colombia remains a conflictive area and Sri Lanka's end of civil war appears to have been more the

model of victory for one side and defeat and humiliation for the minority Tamils. Kashmir is unresolved and there are ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan. Northern Ireland lived through a small scale conflict but finds it impossible to deal with its past and civil conflict has been replaced by narrative conflict. There is no vision of a common good because an unsolvable constitutional problem dominates sectarian politics, which is now a hegemonic duopoly, if that makes sense.

Gender-based violence is still a major concern. Rape as a weapon of war has been largely unacknowledged across the globe. These are prevalent forms of domestic and sexual violence, honour killings and other forms of femicide. Women suffer disproportionately from the effect of militarized economics. *'Military spending creates economic injustice for women, it supports an 'ethic' of violence against women'*.⁴ Patriarchy is pervasive, rooted in history from Babylonian city states and embedded in church and theology by Augustine and other early theologians. The cultural world of the Bible, Hebrew and Christian texts, are patriarchal.

German Reformed theologian, Jürgen Moltmann has drawn critical attention to the European absolutism of the Enlightenment period, which was *'the final form of political monotheism in its religiously legitimized form'*. That was the *'monotheistic notion of the great universal monarch in heaven, and his divine patriarchs in the world...earthly rulers, dictators and tyrants...the figure of the omnipotent, universal monarch, who is reflected in the earthly rulers...'*⁵ Political monotheism was patriarchal monotheism, not only patriarchal rulers, on earth, but the great universal monarch as male, which, of course, could result in the subjugation and repression of women, and justify various forms of gender-based violence. Moltmann goes on to critique clerical monotheism, another form of monarchial monotheism in the churches doctrine of authority, the doctrine and practice of the monarchial episcopate and its further development in the teachings about papal sovereignty. *'Monarchial monotheism justifies the church as hierarchy, a sacred dominion'*.⁶ At heart this is a model of power over, sacred domination, and its vision of God is of power as domination. Once upon a time, long before monarchial monotheism, there was the goddess image, a different model of power that changed to male image and power over when humans moved from pastoral societies to city states with militarism, a war god and patriarchy. It was also the end of the goddess and the beginning of violence against women.

Empires developed claiming absolute power and the sole right to define reality and claim loyal allegiance. The emperor was deified, in Roman imperial times, very God of every God. And in 431 CE the church got into bed with empire, colluded with the militarism and power as domination, and the church mimicked the empire in its power structures and dress. For 1500 years in Europe we had, not only, imperial, monarchial style politics, we had imperial church and imperial theology, at the heart of which was an imperial, often war-god, certainly omnipotent, all-powerful. Empires became characterized by three Gs; gold, guns and god. So the church and its god were present in the conquest of the Americas, the scramble for Africa and the domination of Asia. The Western church, in modern history, Catholic and Protestant, was part of the European hegemony, the Eurocentrism, the colonial expansionism and imperial domination. The hegemony and the centrism have gone, collapsed, so has Western Christendom, but the legacy still troubles our world.

The tentacles of colonialism still reach into every other continent. The struggle of post-colonialism is a living reality for many peoples. Much of the violence that we witness has colonial roots and is the harvest of colonial sowing. Nowhere today is this more acute than the story at the heart of the Muslim world confrontation with the West and the United States.

The 3rd August 2014 marked the centenary of outbreak of World War I. It was the war when humanity first experienced industrialised killing. It was a catastrophic war, not only in the industrial loss of life, but it brought crashing down a world order. Four of six empires collapsed and the other two, French and British got a stay of execution for only four more decades. By the late 1950's and 1960's, the French and British empires had also collapsed. The Paris Peace Conference in 1919 was dominated by the victors. The French had historical reasons to humiliate Germany, but the other victorious powers collaborated in that. The Conference gave the British and the French mandates for the Middle East region, the Arab provinces, which had been part of the collapsed Ottoman Empire. Out of the dismembered empire the two powers carved out five new states, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Iraq and Palestine. The end of four centuries of Turkish rule in the Middle East resulted in the partition of the Arab East with borders and boundaries, which were imposed and shaped by French and British self-interest. These Arab, Muslim populated states were oil states. *'It must be said that some British and French statesmen regarded the distinction between mandates and colonies as no more than a fiction'*.⁷ Mandates were a form of trust to administer a territory. The newly formed League of Nations was supposed to have responsibility for boundaries and forms of governance. The boundaries were drawn in such a way as to create sectarian states such as Syria and Iraq. All of these newly created states were really under imperial domination. That meant that there would be rebellion against European imperialism and independence was slow. Iraq, which still dominates our awareness was only given nominal independence from Britain in 1932.

*...the British continued to partly dominate the Iraqi government and its politics via indirect rule and an unpopular military presence there for twenty-six more years. Most other Muslim states only achieved limited or nominal forms of independence, usually under pliable Western-selected rulers, and only after World War II. The fact that so many Muslim states achieved independence so late helps account for the new emotions still linked with anti-Imperialism among Muslims today; meanwhile, neo-imperial Western political interference is still on-going in quite intrusive ways.*⁸

The legacy of the mandates is still being lived out today. Every Muslim state has had its borders imposed by the West. They were all artificial creations. Today we live with the Muslim confrontation with the West and the U.S. Twentieth century history is of Muslim glory in decline, *'the rise of the West, the takeover of the Muslim world by Western imperial powers, the anti-colonial struggle, and contemporary resentments against Western neo-imperial policies of control and interventionism'*.⁹ Now the US and Britain have intervened at the beginning of the 21st century and in Iraq have seriously exacerbated a sectarian conflict, which the British unwisely and unjustly cobbled together in 1922. Meanwhile Syria, the sectarian state created back then by the French, is a major humanitarian crisis.

European hegemony has died but its legacy in the Middle East is toxic and American interventionism has enhanced the toxic. This is the world in which we are called to build God's peace. It is the context for peacemaking and peacebuilding. If European hegemony, imperialism and its legacy along with American imperial intervention and militarism have created a sectarian, seething Middle East, then what of the god

who has legitimized and blessed all of this? It is the imperial god of Christendom, the war-god, the patriarchal god, the omnipotent, all conquering god, the god of violence.

Diarmaid MacCulloch in his History of Christianity, a tour de force, which actually begins with ancient Greece in 1000 BCE, has described 1914-1918 as a war that killed Christendom. Going into that war the union of religion and power politics was strong. By 1918 it had been shattered.

The greatest casualty commemorated in this multitude of crosses and symbols of war is the union between Christianity and secular power: Christendom itself. By the end of the 1960's, the alliance between empires and bishops which Constantine had first generated was a ghost; a fifteen-hundred-year-old adventure was at an end.¹⁰

All but one of the six empires that went to war in 1914 were self-proclaimed Christian empires. Four had collapsed by the end of that war and the other two were already on their way out. The war had killed Christendom, the imperial religion and its imperial god. I am not sure that European Christianity has yet fully acknowledged the death of Christendom and the cultural and political disestablishment of churches. The remembering over the next four years of the Great War centenary might provide European churches with space for serious reflection and the opportunity to grieve loss of power and privilege. It is something the ecumenical movement might also need to do because 20th century ecumenism was rooted in a Christendom model. And the god of Christendom, the imperialistic, war-god of Christendom, might be pronounced dead and given a happy burial. How we vision a God of peace who sends us to build peace in a still violent world, will be a very different god from the god of the last 1500 years of Christendom. Who the God of peace is may require a theological revolution and radical revisioning.

Just Peacebuilding

For a long time we have worked with two paradigms in relation to war and violence. These are the just war theory and pacifism. As the 20th century moved on and after two world wars and many acts of genocide both of those paradigms were challenged, largely by experience. Were either the just war theory or pacifism adequate? About thirty years ago thinking developed around a third paradigm. Nuclear weapons build-up raised serious questions about the two existing paradigms. Weapons of mass destruction created a global awareness that war-preventing practices needed to be developed. Leaders in the field were Christian ethicists, some pacifists and most just war theorists and the engagement of representatives of both paradigms pushed questions well beyond the traditional. The key questions were: what steps should be taken to prevent war? What concrete practices make for peace? The third paradigm that has emerged is called just peacemaking and those who developed it were realistic to know that this war-prevention approach was not going to stop all wars or prevent all violence. Just peacemaking, war prevention and practices that make peace can take us a long way, and has also developed into just policing. The approach has also been used to decrease homicides. But if it does not work we are still thrown back on the just war theory or the pacifist commitment to non-violence. Nevertheless, the horrors of war and violence are such that war-preventing and violence preventing practices as well as peacebuilding practices are essential. The

third paradigm pushes us to find ways of preventing war and violence and making real peace. In the context of faith we are looking at a positive and concrete theology of peacebuilding, a theological peacebuilding praxis. *'If you want peace, prepare for peace (not for war). The concept of Just Peace stands for a fundamental shift'*.¹¹ So what is this third paradigm?

There are ten practices of just peacebuilding. I will list them and explore briefly some of the more pertinent practices for us, with the understanding that all ten belong together. Here too there is interdependence. Then we will turn the spotlight on the key word, just or justice.

1. *Support non-violent direct action*

Practitioners of non-violent direct action were Gandhi and Martin Luther King and one example of this practice in action was Eastern and Central Europe in 1989.

2. *Taking independent initiatives to reduce threat*

This is about decreasing threat and distrust that make negotiations so difficult. It also involves careful timing, announcement of clear purpose and consists of viable and verifiable actions.

3. *Use cooperative conflict resolution*

Governments will show how serious they are about peace in their intention to initiate negotiations or refusal, and whether in those initiatives there is an understanding of the adversary's perspectives and needs.

4. *Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice: seek repentance and forgiveness*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer led a concrete example of this which was followed by the German Confessing Church, in confessing the sin of support for Hitler and his terrible violence and injustice. The various Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, and there are or have been some twenty-plus commissions, are attempts to take responsibility, express deep sorrow and enact forgiveness.

5. *Promote democracy, human rights and religious liberty*

'Spreading human rights, religious liberty and democracy is effective in building peace' (12). Democracy is enhanced by the rule of law, freedom of expression and practice and human rights which protect citizens from violations of their humanity, and in contested societies, protect citizens from each other, and build humane relationships. Embedded democracies, conscious that their democracy is always a work in progress, do not generally go to war with each other and carry a strong potential to prevent violence.

6. *Foster just and sustainable economic development*

We note the word just and will return to it. It is the reminder that real peace is a just peace and that applies to the development of sustainable economic systems. Peace requires a more equitable world economy where extremes of wealth and poverty are intentionally and progressively overcome. This is not the only continent where wealth is owned by a few. It is a global reality and the many have-nots cry out for justice, economic justice.

7. *Work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system*

Global communication and travel, global migration and global trade are more and more knitting us together as a global community in which we are increasingly global citizens. We belong to an international

community in which interaction and interdependence are prerequisites for peace and not war. The negative is that *'Undoubtedly, competition over such scarce goods as territory, natural resources, wealth, trade routes, strategic positions, and the like has been a prominent cause of war and still is'*.¹³

On the positive side, 'The dramatic rise in international transactions and organisations means far greater interdependence among states and at least potentially greater incentives for cooperation and disincentives for overt conflict.'¹⁴

No state stands alone today nor can it act in terms of *'ourselves alone'*. There is no absolute sovereignty, but increasingly pooled sovereignty. Interdependence is and will be the key to just peace. There are potential openings for peacemakers and peacebuilders to exploit.

8. Strengthen the United Nations and international organisations

War between states may be on the decline, but even the intra-state conflict and violence has international dimensions. The legacy of colonialism and superpower interference and intervention are the international dimensions to many conflictual and violent situations.

Weapons cross borders and terrorism is international in its operation. International organisations are trans-global. They exist across borders and because they are trans-regional, they have potential as peacemakers and peacebuilders. But this requires strengthening, intentional practice of interdependence and cooperation. The United Nations has a key role but it is too often sidelined and disempowered by the behaviour and actions of a few powerful nations. The Peace Conference of Paris 1919, established the League of Nations as the new hope for avoiding another catastrophe like 1914-1918, but the US did not sign up to it and the two remaining empires of the Great War, France and Britain, usurped its role in shaping boundaries in the Middle East. The United Nations, likewise has had its teeth extracted or damaged by key state members of the Security Council. The USA and Russia have a permanent veto. Seventy years on from the end of World War II do we still need a big seven with powers of veto when their self-interest is threatened? The likelihood of the US and Russia giving up their power of veto is probably nil. Powers want to dominate. Yet strengthening the United Nations is essential for action at a number of levels in today's world. In a globalized world we cannot afford solo players. Greater international cooperation and trans-national collaboration are essential for preventing war and violence and building peace.

9. Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade

The reality is that *'Weapons have become so destructive that war is usually not worth the price'*.¹⁵ Military consumerism needs to be reduced. The sale of weapons to small undeveloped nations needs to be further reduced. The reduction in nuclear weapons led to the end of the Cold War, though in places like the Korean peninsula and Ukraine, we are still operating out of the Cold War paradigm and looking for solutions within that paradigm. Embedded, inclusive democracy and a sustainable human rights culture ought to reduce a government need for large militaries to keep them in power. It has been claimed that *'Nations with human rights and democracy, which do a better job of meeting the needs of their people, almost never breed terrorists'* ¹⁶

10. Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations

Just peacebuilding needs both strengthened and interdependent international organisations and the grassroots and voluntary sector. It requires the local also to be proactive, to be informed and intentional. Faith-based groups, citizen groups, local civic fora need to test their governments' claims to want peace and lobby to ensure that steps for peace are being taken. People power needs to hold politicians, national and local, to account, engage them in dialogue and call the double standards or the hypocrisy. Politicians like to make much of mandates. Civic, grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations can help shape the mandates, hold politicians to their mandates and in relation to faith, don't vote for certain politicians just because they make faith claims. Born-again Christians or devout Catholics do not necessarily make good politicians. And beware of those who lean towards theocracy rather than democracy. Transnationally and locally we can help shape and support transforming initiatives, challenge captivity to narrow national or ideological perspectives, including religious ones. There is a role to be played in breaking out of the cycles of injustice and violence.

These are the ten practices of just peacebuilding that can prevent war and violence and build a just peace. The key is justice.

The mantra is an obvious truism. There is no peace without justice. Authentic theological praxis is working together for justice and peace. They are inseparable. If there is no justice, there is no peace. If there is no peace, it is because there is no justice. The Hebrew poet recognized this a long time ago.

Truth and mercy have met together

Peace and justice have kissed (Psalm 85 v 10)

The relationship is as close and intimate as that. But with authentic insight the reality can be expressed in another way.

Truth and mercy have collided

Peace and justice have clashed

In real life situations of war, violence and conflict they often do and yet they need to kiss and embrace. In the foundational documents of Jewish and Christian faith, justice is the key idea. A word found some 2000 times in Hebrew Bible and Christian scriptures is not to be ignored. There is no other idea more central. The Bible has a passion for justice. And though the Bible speaks of God, the sacred in various ways, some ethical, some not so ethical, the core vision is of the sacred on fire for justice. Perhaps the key Pauline letter, Romans, can be described as on fire with the justice of God. It may be, therefore, that justice is the hermeneutical key to our reading of the biblical text. Justice is the ethical benchmark when we read texts of terror, when we encounter those violent narratives and when we come face to face with a violent, warrior god. The key biblical benchmark of justice makes our reading more critical, discerning and razor sharp. So too when we encounter the patriarchy and patriarchal culture of the Bible, when the narratives express gender injustice, we filter those narratives through justice. Justice also becomes the benchmark when reading the texts that have been literalized to justify racism, homophobia, sexism, ecocide systems of economic oppression, abuses of power and warped criminal justice systems, including punitive systems and punitive cultures. Justice becomes our litmus test and ethical benchmark.

In all of this biblical emphasis on justice, there is very little on punitive justice. It is there, and there is a place for punitive justice but it by no means predominates the biblical vision. Most of the justice emphasis is on social justice and has to do with political and economic structures. Covenant is another key biblical idea and it is mainly to do with economics. So justice in Amos or Romans, in Deuteronomy or Matthew is about distributive and restorative justice. There is to be no permanent underclass. Legal, political and economic systems are to be shaped by justice that is equitable, distributes goods and resources fairly and restores the dignity of every person, victim and offender, restores the person to a full place in community and restores community equilibrium and wellbeing. The Bible frequently interchanges justice and righteousness, the latter being right relations based on social and restorative justice. Right relations are based on justice and that is why peace is also closely aligned with the word-cluster of justice, righteousness, peace and compassion or social solidarity.

This is why in the just peacebuilding paradigm, justice is key to preventing war and violence. It makes war and violence implausible and unacceptable and through the ten practices, *'it embraces social justice, the rule of law, respect for human rights and shared human security'*. And as the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah put it, *'To do justice is to know God'*, a different kind of God from the god of war, militarism, nationalism and omnipotent power-over and all-conquering.

Peace as a sacred and interreligious vocation

Hans King, the German Catholic theologian has said repeatedly that there will be no peace in the world except there is peace between the world's religions, and there will be no peace between the world's religions unless there is dialogue between the world's religions. The West has undoubtedly experienced religious decline. Institutional forms of religion have been in decline for some time and there is the perspective that the First World War killed off Christendom. But Christendom was a Western phenomenon and the proponents of secularism have been noisy about the death of Christendom and the abolition of all forms of religion from the public square. But that is a Western, largely European phenomenon, often intolerant, fundamentalist and anti-democracy. It is, of course, a mirror image of much of traditional Western Christianity with roots in 381CE when Emperor Theodosius closed down Christian thought and put a large full stop at the end of Christendom. Religious fundamentalism and secular fundamentalism are both rooted in fear and deny human freedom. But though the West through its imperialism and imperialistic religion once dominated the world, that era has gone. Globalisation has many negatives but part of its experiential reality is that we live in a religious world. Christian faith may only make up a third of that world, but through the classic religions and the indigenous religions, most of the planet is characterized by a multi-religious landscape. In this multi or pluralist landscape Christianity is numerically large but no longer dominant and certainly no longer imperialistic. Christians are about one third of the world's population and in religious terms globally, we are one among many. We live in a world of religious pluralism, with many and diverse truth claims in which there is no monopoly of the sacred. For those of us who claim to be Christian, there are radical implications for our self-understanding. It certainly has radical implications for our understanding and experience of the sacred and how we understand and experience God. Global awareness including the awareness of neighbour religions and a pluralistic religious planet, challenge us to a critical examination of

traditional Christian concepts of Christology and Missiology. If our theological reflection is at best contextual, then we are in an increasingly global and changing context.

Christians cannot avoid their multi-religious neighbours, and the three monotheistic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam cannot any longer make total, absolute and final truth claims. In humility, and perhaps in Christianity in particular, we need to lower our voices and realize that in the landscape of truth, there is also lived interdependence.

As citizens of planet earth we are neighbours now in an unprecedented way. And if justice, social justice, is the core vision of the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Testament and the Qur'an, and it is, then our sense of the sacred requires us to relate to each other justly, to engage with that high water mark of Abrahamic ethics, the Hebrew prophet Micah, *'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God'*. The Abrahamic traditions are ethical and prophetic traditions with social ethics and social justice as their core emphasis. And there are similar core ethics and virtues at the heart of other religions. *'But if we pass a strainer through the world's religions to lift out their conclusions about reality and how life should be lived, those conclusions begin to look like the winnowed wisdom of the human race'*.¹⁷ The religious of the world embody a wisdom tradition. They are the *'wisdom traditions of humankind'*. Globalisation does not mean that we move to a mass-culture, though there is a cultural imperialism hand in hand with a political and economic imperialism that threatens that. Neither does globalization mean that we move to a world or global religion. Such a move would immediately corrupt religion. We are many, we are plural, we are diverse and the sacred has many visible expressions and truth is plural in its expressions and always provisional. But however diverse the embodiments and articulations, there is at heart, a core ethical base and common virtue, which the wisdom religious traditions identify as basically three. I quote Huston Smith again that the basic three are:

*...humility, charity, and veracity. Humility is not self-abasement. It is the capacity to regard oneself in the company of others as one, but not more than one. Charity shifts that shoe to the other foot; it is to regard ones neighbor as likewise one, as fully one as oneself. As for veracity, it extends beyond the minimum of truth telling to sublime objectivity, the capacity to see things exactly as they are. To conform one's life to the way things are is to live authentically.*¹⁸

These three values are found in the Abrahamic religions, and in the Asian religions, such as Buddhism and Taoism. There is something also at the heart of religions that is authentic. There is, call it the intuition, that the full picture is more integrated than we are capable of thinking or imagining. But life gives us no view of the whole. We see only snatches here and there, and *'self-interest skews our perspective grotesquely'*.¹⁹ As the Jewish Christian Paul put it, *'For now we see in a mirror, dimly'*. Or in a riddle, or only puzzling reflections in a mirror. When religions get caught up with political power, they often forget that. They institutionalize and absolutize their truth claims and corrupt their wisdom in the process. The great tapestry of life is often being viewed from the wrong side. What the religious traditions as wisdom traditions are at their best trying to do is help us catch a glimpse of the life tapestry from the right side, which gives some kind of meaning to the whole.

So the eco-world, that square meter of top soil is highlighting eco-wisdom for the religious world, that we are many and one, that we are interdependent and interdependence and just interdependence is the way to peace, wholeness and harmony.

What we may be learning in a globalized and interdependent world is that it is not possible to be religious without being interreligious. My experience of the sacred, of God, of the numinous, the something more, is enriched and nurtured through the encounter and dialogue between the many religions. And so peace is a sacred and interreligious vocation. No religion can build the peace alone. There is no peace in the world without peace between the world's religions. And there may be no peace in the world unless it comes through the world's religions partnering each other and collaborating with each other in its building.

In history religions have become corrupted by power and in their politicized form have legitimized and provided sacred authorization for violence. All religions have a shadow side and we need to acknowledge it honestly. But there is also the better side, to add a word to the title of Steven Pinker's book, *The Better Angels of our Religious Nature*. The better angels are the core ethics, virtues and values. Religions, of course, do not have the monopoly on violence, genocide and killing. Secular and atheistic regimes were responsible for much slaughter and destruction in the dark 20th century, so even if there was no religion on the planet, there would still be mass killing because in some sense, we humans are the most dangerous animal on the planet. Certainly no other animal kills or slaughters its own kind to the same brutal extent that the human animal does. So religions have been violent but there are the better angels of our religious nature.

The biggest threat to our world today and the greatest challenge to peace and peacebuilding is centered on the Middle East and does seem to have a strong religious dimension. It looks like a confrontation between Christian West and Muslim East. We might say that if there were no Christianity in the West and no Islam in the Middle East, we would still have the threat and potential for terrible violence and war. This is not to excuse religion but to recognize other complex dynamics that have made this region what it is.

Probably no other region of the world has endured such intense and sustained intervention from the West than the Middle East. There are several major reasons: its immediate proximity to the West – a West that later developed powerful expansionist impulses; the attraction of the Middle East's huge energy resources and its related massive financial influence; and its strategic location for millennia as an East-West crossroads in international geopolitics. We...saw the impact of colonialism, imperialism, and neo-imperialism over several centuries and the intensification of US interventionism in the present. The cumulative anger, frustration, and radicalism that this history of intervention has produced are abundantly evident.²⁰

These enormous resentments and angry frustrations in the Middle East, perhaps, look for a vehicle to express them or a lens to articulate them, and is religion, and we might ask why not, a strong cultural power, in this case, Islam? And the West is perceived as Christian, and was not its history the history of Christendom, which itself was the corrupting, violent power of politics and religion as a single entity?

If this is where a major challenge for peace lies in our world today, then we dare not pretend that religion is not part of the violent cocktail. Nor dare we assume that religion has no role to play in peacemaking and peacebuilding. Just peacebuilding and integrated peacebuilding are core to our vision and praxis. The God

who sends us out to build peace will be envisioned in a radically different way from the god of Christendom, imperialism and the warrior god. The sense of the sacred at the heart of all life will draw us into peace as a sacred and interreligious vocation. At the very least Christians and Muslims need to identify and act out of their common cause.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON McMASTER,

2014

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Appendix 2: Chairperson's Address

INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates, Senior Friends and invited persons to the 35th WSCF General Assembly. I greet you in the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, wishing that His wisdom guides us all throughout this very important event. The theme *We are many we are one: Sent out to build God's peace* reflects the call of God for Unity in Diversity to be witnesses of the Shalom, peace with justice and dignity for all human beings and the whole Creation.

The selection of this lovely country for our Assembly did not happen by chance. Colombia is for us, a symbol of the people, churches and organizations that in resistance and persistence, have brought the light of life in the middle of difficulties. The experience of the Colombian students and churches is here to remind us about the power of God to build from the witnesses in the communities, the permanent call for dialogue and non-violent action, the pastoral accompaniment to those who suffer. We acknowledge the importance of the Colombian churches for our own internal discussion, and as an act of gratitude, we want to be close to them in prayer and solidarity.

In the year of the 120th anniversary of the creation of our Federation, this Assembly remains an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our Ministry with students, to identify the challenges for the future, and to discern the ways to revitalize our global mission in contexts of social, economic and ecological injustice, as well as of conflict and violence. While keeping the spirit of fellowship, community and celebration of being One Christ, this Assembly is called with a sense of urgency and gravity.

In times when the sustainability of our Federation is at stake, this Assembly gives us a chance, guided by the light of God, to analyze this situation and make decisions to project a Federation that is not only true to its tradition, but increasingly vital in the development of ecumenical leaders around the world.

In this opportunity, I would like to share some reflections in relation to the context in which the Federation has worked, as well as to our mission, strategy and capacities, as an input for the analysis and decision making we will process during these days.

THE CONTEXT OF THE WORK SINCE 2008

The context in which our work has developed since 2008 is framed by the global financial crisis that started in 2009. Our funding partners, included the ecumenical agencies which are presently the main source of funding of the WSCF, saw their own budgets reduced because of the crisis, but also due to the changing government cooperation policies. In the case of the WSCF, we need to add the impact of the depreciation of the euro against the US dollar, given that our income is mostly in euros and a significant part of our expenses are in US currency.

Second, differently from how we worked in the past, in the present and in the future we cannot now depend on ecumenical partners to cover the payment of salaries in the first months of the year. The World Council of Churches, that graciously gave us that support for years, is no longer in a position to do so in the future. From 2015, the WSCF will have to make its payments based on the funds available on a monthly basis.

Third, the standards of international and ecumenical cooperation have changed in the past six years. In addition to the requirement of being accountable for our finances and our activities, the new standards require that we are also accountable for our contribution to change in relation to specific problems we identify at the movement level in different contexts. The so-called outcome and impact orientation leads us on the one hand to work on a relevant, consistent, visible, viable and sustainable strategy, and on the other hand, to strengthen the communication and visibility of the changes we contribute to, for the transformation of the lives of peoples and communities with a sense of promotion of dignity, peace and justice.

Fourth, it is no longer accepted in the cooperation and ecumenical environment that we carry on our mission alone. Creating synergies, not duplicating the work, promoting mutual learning and solidarity among organizations and across boundaries of regions, cultures and denominations are requirements of all partners, funding and non-funding.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the WSCF, as a global community of Student Christian Movements, is to empower students in critical thinking and constructive transformation of the world through prayer, celebration, theological reflection, study and analysis, and solidarity action. We, the WSCF, are called to be a prophetic witness in the Church and in society, visible in our commitment to dialogue, ecumenism, social justice and peace, nurtured by our radical hope in God's reign in History.

As expressed in the mission statement approved in the 2004 assembly, movements are at the center of our Federation. The actual milieu in which prayer, study, and leadership development work with the community and solidarity happens is at the grassroots level. And at the same time we are, and have been from our very inception 120 years ago, a global organization in a time when the word "globalization" did not even exist. Acknowledging the universal vocation of God's mission carried by the Church of Jesus Christ, and the mission movement of the late 19th Century from which we come, the present contexts brings new questions in relation to our global identity.

Our mission of effectively empowering students, and I would add, student movements, for a relevant and significant Christian testimony cannot ignore the potential of being a global federation. What does leadership development mean without the ability to bring together perspectives from different churches, cultures, social and political environments to have a response to these times of complexity? What does solidarity and advocacy mean without this worldwide outlook? What

does analysis mean if we are not able to engage the different theoretical and practical perspectives from different regions? What do dignity, justice and peace mean if we do not have the means to consider in our analysis and actions the dynamic of global politics today?

The image of the Church as the Body of Christ keeps inspiring us as a Federation, as well as the whole ecumenical movement in its global, worldwide dimension, to uphold unity and celebrate our diversity to serve the community and transform the world in love, and also in the sense of making the whole body sensitive towards, and in, solidarity with its most vulnerable members.

The challenges to the sustainability of the Federation as a global body are the challenges to fulfilling the conditions to achieve our mission at a worldwide, comprehensive, holistic level. To start reversing this situation, we need to start asking ourselves:

- How can we be a truly global body (the question of identity and ownership)?
How can we work together as a global body to bring the good news of dignity, peace and justice to every student every moment, every context?
- How can we relate internally and in our partnerships as a global body?

Ut unum sint - that they all be one. We are many, we are one - unity, diversity, global testimony in each one of, among us, and beyond us, to be true witnesses of God's transforming power.

STRATEGY

The 34th WSCF General Assembly signified a turning point in the life of the Federation in terms of setting a strategy and building a strategic plan in a participatory process. As an outcome of the Assembly held in Montreal, the work of the commissions was systematized, approved by the plenary, and taken by the Executive Committee to build a plan that set the areas of work, objectives and goals for the coming years.

Consistent with the work done by the delegates in Montreal, four areas were defined in the Plan: Radical renewal of Biblical and Theological reflection; Ecumenical leadership formation; Advocacy and solidarity; and Capacity development. These areas guided the definition of programs at the global level, as well as oriented the work in the regions. As a general overview of the work in the past years:

Biblical and theological reflection remains a component to be included in all programs, respecting the recommendations made by the assembly in Montreal regarding hermeneutics and pedagogical approaches. In many opportunities this reflection could transcend the specific content of a training program and be an input in the broader ideological debates in the regions or at the global level. This reality is nevertheless not a trend in our Federation.

Ecumenical leadership formation remains to be the strongest area of work in the WSCF, both at the regional and global levels. Examples will be shared in the regional and inter-regional reports. Still, we can account for young leaders trained by the WSCF who are a valuable resource for churches and ecumenical organizations.

Advocacy and solidarity as a structured area of work was launched in the 34th General Assembly, coordinated by a global working group with protocols, effective coordinated action and good internal leadership. Indeed, the process related to advocacy work can be considered a learning one. Things did not work perfectly at the very beginning and no doubt there's a lot that can be improved, but surely with the experience the working group had the chance to reflect and improve their procedures and systems.

Capacity development focused on training and on the building of systems, policies and procedures to interconnect effectively the work of the movements, regions and the inter-regional office. Building on the evaluation of the Ecumenical Assistance Program, this area aimed at strengthening a common outcome and impact orientation for programs, improved interpretation and visibility of the work in the movements and regions, as well as quality and timeliness of communications, reporting and internal as well as external accountability. We need to acknowledge that the efforts invested in this area were significant, although the expected impact of the process was less than we had hoped.

I bring this point for your reflection in order to bring awareness that alignment with an agreed strategy and being accountable for our contribution to change in relation to that strategy is key for our sustainability. Improving and even changing the present state of things surely implies insisting on training and the design of systems, but it also involves more reflection about our own management and governance structures and styles, as well as our own organizational culture.

During this assembly, we need to answer three questions:

- How can we ensure that our agreed strategy permeates the global programs as well as the work in the regions and movements?
- How do we make our strategy visible to our partners?
- How do we make our achievements visible to ourselves and to inspire the partners that walk with us and trust their resources to us?

During two moments in 2013, during the staff meeting in Cairo in February and at the Exco meeting in October, we were able to reflect on the potentials and limitations of our strategic plan on the basis of the work done in the movements as reported by the regions, and of the projects submitted to the EAP. One key aspect is that out of four areas, three are oriented to internal organizational development, and only one to impact on the context. The analysis of the work done by the movements showed that the spectrum of activities was a lot richer.

This Assembly will reflect on our future strategy, but as a part of the reflection made by the Executive Committee, I would like to highlight the importance of leveraging the work on biblical and theological analysis, connecting this reflection with the ideological frameworks being discussed in the international arena (development and Good Living paradigm, to mention one). Also, we need to deepen our reflection and action related to the work with the communities for the full exercise of rights and from a perspective of resilience, as well as strengthening our work in advocacy, solidarity, and movement building.

OUR INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

The work of the WSCF relies on the efforts made by thousands of volunteers at the level of the SCMs. Without the commitment and passion of every SCMer many of the achievements that will be presented in the regional and global reports would not have been possible.

To link regionally and globally the voices, activities and resources from the grassroots, we work with a small number of dedicated staff persons based in our six regional offices (the North America regional office being the most recent), and our inter-regional office in Geneva. The administrative staff in the regional offices is minimal or in most of the cases non-existent, and the inter-regional office that has reduced significantly its staffing levels in the past few years and taken on functions related to the work of the Centennial Fund.

Our Senior Friends remain an important source of inspiration, wisdom and support (including financial support) for the WSCF. In the past, our Senior Friends have assisted us in pastoral accompaniment, Bible study in our statutory meetings, and advisory services in the officers' and staff meetings. No less important has been the financial support that we have received directly from Senior Friends, including for the organization of this Assembly, and from the Centennial Fund, that has helped us significantly in overcoming financial problems in recent years. We are deeply grateful to them, and we thank God for the gift of inter-generational cooperation, one of the spiritual treasures we continue to nurture in our Federation.

Our institutional capacity is not only expressed by the commitment of the SCMer, the professional quality of our staff or our strong links with the previous generations of leaders. It is also expressed in our organizational culture, structures, systems, policies and procedures that we have built along decades of history. In this sense, our capacity is as weak as our weakest link.

Today, the most important challenge is to bring the global closer to the local, the regions closer to each other within a global perspective, the entire Federation closer the churches and partners.

The commonly used expression "The Federation is its regions" highlight both the actual achievements of our work, and the potential to link the WSCF processes with other social and political dynamics in the regions. But at the same time, the effects of our structures on our institutional culture, the lack of proper systems to connect the different levels of the Federation, and our own leadership at the management and governance styles, will show limitations in our capacities that will become visible not only to ourselves but also to our partners.

In this 35th General Assembly, a report from the Future of the Federation Task Group, which was appointed by the Executive Committee, will be presented to the plenary. An analysis of the structure, functioning and strategy of the Federation was carried out, and some recommendations for the future were elaborated. We expect this General Assembly to carry out a process of reflection of our internal processes in relation to the context and our partnerships, in order to be able to change what needs to be changed, in order to respond faithfully to our History and effectively and in a sustainable way, to the challenges before us.

SUSTAINABILITY

After these considerations regarding our mission, structure and capacities, I will end by reconnecting with the points raised at the beginning of my presentation regarding our sustainability. Sustainability is beyond project management and fundraising. It is actually related to the quality of our internal and external relations, the sharing of perspectives, objectives, strategies and resources.

In this wider sense, we need to continue working on the pillars of our sustainability:

- a. Sustainability from the grassroots, with improved ownership of the global Federation at the movement level in order to mobilize the richness of resources, including financial, at the grassroots level.
- b. Sustainability in interregional cooperation, improving the quality of our mechanisms for fundraising, implementation of projects, communications, visibility, reporting, and accountability towards the movements, among the regions and with our partners.
- c. Sustainability in inter-generational cooperation, nurturing the continuous dialogue with our Senior Friends, promoting the mutual learning across generations of leaders, and supporting the work of the Centennial Fund.
- d. Sustainability in partnership, leveraging our relations in shared mission, moving beyond the sharing of resources to the sharing of strategies and objectives for common impact.
- e. Sustainability in context, being able to mobilize resources from non-traditional sources in relation to relevant issues that affect the lives of youth and students in the present times.

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

I will end my address with a word of appreciation to all the members of the Executive Committee, regional representatives, officers and staff. Your support, accompaniment, wisdom and criticism made me grow as a person during these years.

A special word of gratitude to the Centennial Fund. We would not be here today without your support.

To our partners, who have walked with us during these years, thank you for your commitment towards our Federation.

Last, thanks be given to God, who blessed each one of us with wisdom, hope and love to keep spreading the Good News of plentiful and dignified life and sending us out to build a world of peace and justice for all.

We are many.

We are one.

Ut Unum Sint.

Horacio Mesones, WSCF Chairperson

Appendix 3: Treasurer's Report



Honorary Treasurer's Report

To The WSCF

35th General Assembly Bogota Colombia 2015

This report refers to the Finances of the WSCF IRO (Inter Regional Office) These include all the activities carried on by the IRO – The Executive Staff (General Secretary and Regional secretaries) – The IRO staff and all The Administration costof the IRO – The Organization of meetings of the Executive Committees – General Assemblies - Ecumenical Assistance program This report and Accounting Figures do not include the administration of the regional offices and the financing of regional programs. Nor do they include the WSCF Centennial Fund Whose Board will bring its own report.

It reflects the financial situation of the IRO (Inter Regional Office) since August 2008, which is the time of the election of the current Exco at the 2008 34th General Assembly in Montreal, Canada till now.

Acknowledgement:

It is important to highlight the remarkable efforts of the previous EXCO and then the new EXCO. Members, the Staff, the Finance Committee, WSCF Accountants Mrs. Henriette Brachet and Mr. Peter Tyler and newly Mr Jean-Luc De-la-Soujole whom is attending this assembly and my Fellow Officers handling our finances and controlling the budget. Your wisdom and cooperation is the most encouraging factorthat enable us to proceed further.

Financial Journey:

The present Exco started with a slight reserve so we were so conservative towards finances during this Quadrennium. We are dealing with the WSCF Finances as if we are in

the Emergency Room and it lasts like that till now. So really it is a big journey and a very interesting one. I know it seems somehow far away when we should be talking and dealing with the Missionary work, movementbuilding, leadership formation, development and all these things. But in order to make all this happen and to assure the WSCF survival and sustainability we need to think beyond the debits and credits, expenses and income, surplus and deficits. These are very important factors that keeps our unique and marvelous Federation alive. So we have to care about them for the sake of the Student Christian Movements worldwide, to help them, support them in their struggles and challenges for peace and justice, survival, and to help students all over the world. We all are here in this Assembly coming from our local SCM's carrying their dreams and hopes.

We have a responsibility towards those great movements.

So going back to our Financial Journey accompanying our SCM one. The present ExCo started after the 2008 Assembly which happened to have a big deficit in this year result that mostly takes over all our reserves and ended up with a positive reserve 8,813 US\$.

In 2009 it had happened that we have a deficit of 10,6407 US\$ that make it more complicated and one of the main reasons is that after the 2008 Global financial crisis that affected some of our donors especially the Centennial fund affected them that they couldn't give us the usual grants.

At the beginning of the 2010, the General Secretary, Mr. Michael Wallace, declared his resignation and the IRO went into vacancy for most of that year till the Exco elected Miss Christine Housel in Beirut October 2010. This year of vacancy affected the situation very much and made it even harder to control our finances although we tried our best. At the end of the year, we had a deficit of 67,152 US\$ reaching an Accumulated Deficit 164,747 US\$.

In 2011 we succeeded to balance the budget and achieve a slight surplus of 13,207 US\$ that starts to decrease the accumulated deficit overall.

In 2012 we succeeded in achieving another surplus of 41,427 US\$ that enabled further progress in decreasing the accumulated deficit.

In 2013 we achieved a slight surplus of 8,605 US\$ but still we had the accumulated deficit.

We don't yet have audited figures for 2014 but the initial numbers show a deficit of 59,693 US\$ and that is due a deviation from budget on the income side of more than 110,000 US\$. This is because we budgeted for senior friends outreach (75,000 US\$) and also for other income from SCM Norway that we didn't receive and all senior friends outreach funds collected were directed to the General assembly budget instead of the core budget. In order to control this we tried to control expenses intensively in order to lessen the deficit as much as we could by reaching out to new donors added to our list in 2014 and starting the **Give One Be One Campaign**.

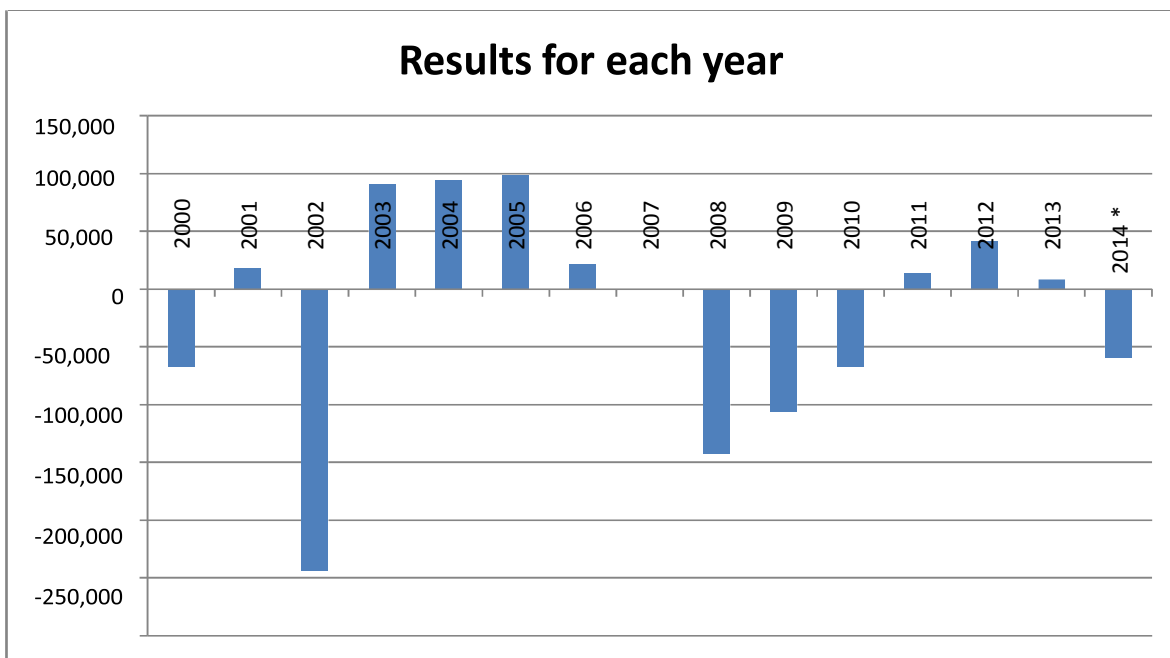
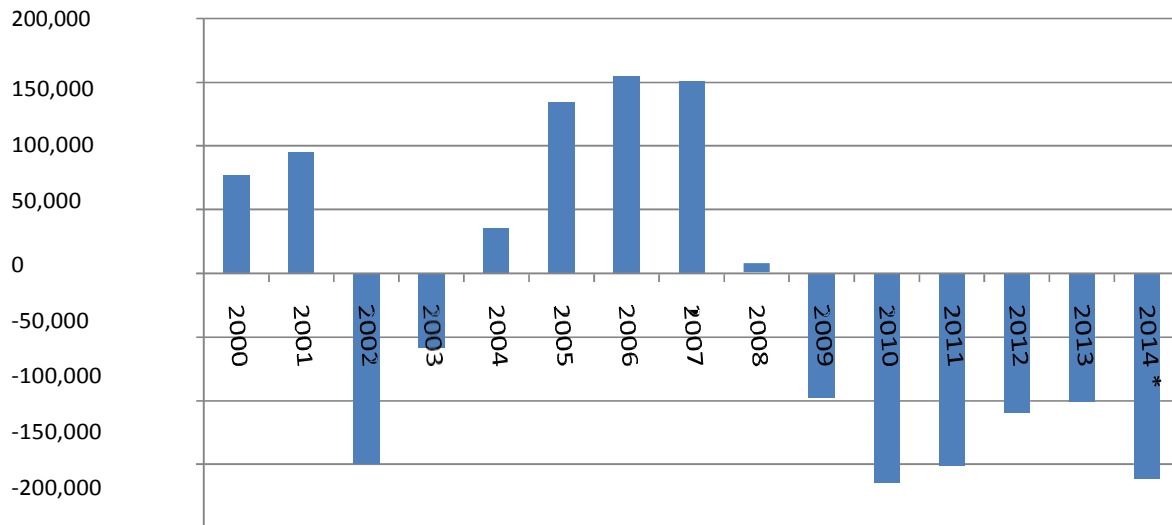
I would like to point out that the negative reserves (accumulated deficits) that we are living with, make it very hard to control and adapt our cash flow. Thus we can't survive till now unless we have the cash advance support provided by the WCC. We are very grateful to them for the great support they have offered us and also for the support from the Centennial Fund. (Important note: the WCC is no longer able to offer this support due to their own financial struggles - we will deal with that issue later on this report on how we are going to face this situation)

Living with these challenges makes the work of the Finance committee very difficult, intensively trying to control things as much as it can do.

Year	Acc. Reserve carried from past year	Current year Result	Acc. Reserve at year end
2000	143,445	-66,916	76,529
2001	76,529	18,270	94,799
2002	94,799	-244,069	-149,270
2003	-149,270	90,584	-58,686
2004	-58,686	94,294	35,608
2005	35,608	98,380	133,988
2006	133,988	20,713	154,701
2007	154,701	-3,677	151024
2008	151024	-142211	8813
2009	8813	-106407	-97594
2010	-97594	-67153	-164747
2011	-164747	13207	-151540
2012	-151540	41427	-110113
2013	-110113	8605	-101507
2014 *	-101507	-59693	-161200

* Year 2014 are initial figures not yet audited.

Acc. Reserve (Acc. deficit) at year end



From the facts above:

Upon the above facts and to assess the situation well we need to analyze the full figures to draw a financial roadmap for the future.

We see that there are 3 group of factors affecting this situation. The first refers to the points that affect our situation negatively and make it more difficult to manage the federation’s finances;

the second are those factors acting in our favour, thus helping us to control the situation and the third group refers to challenges we are facing now and into the future. We will try to illustrate each group as follows:

A. Factors Against financial stability:

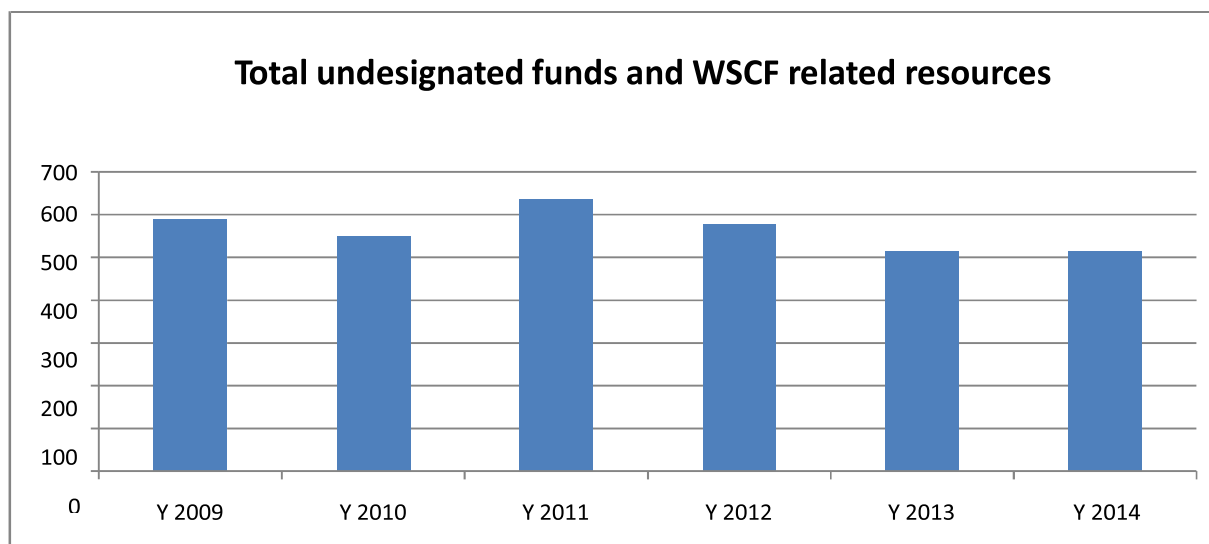
I) The continuous decrease in the undesignated funds:

In the past number of years it has been very clear that undesignated funds are declining from one year to the next as our partners are no longer willing or able to give us such grants. This can be illustrated by the following table.

Decline in total undesignated funds:

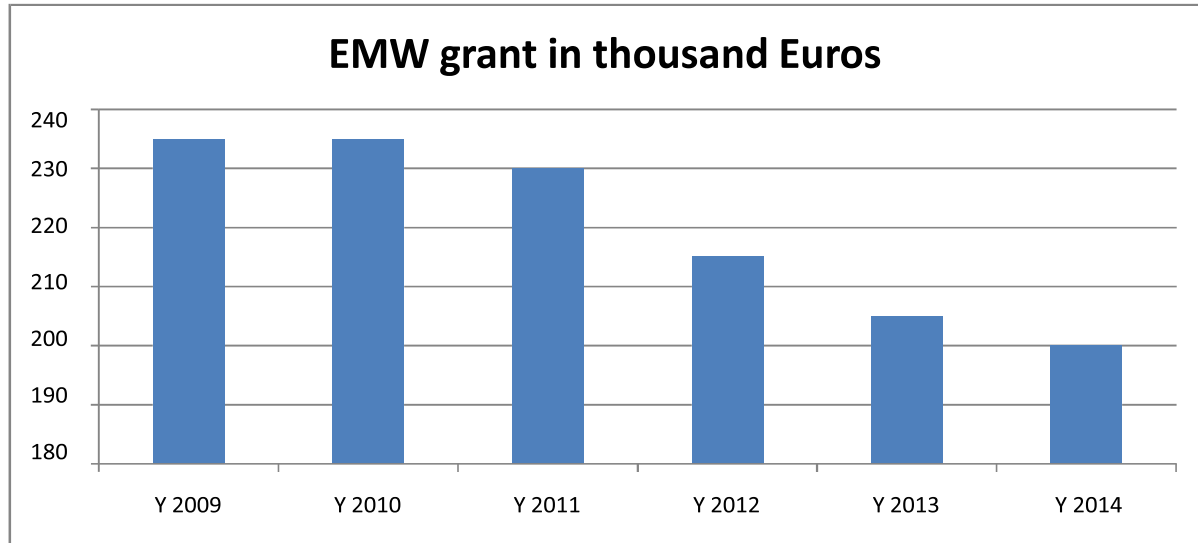
Year	Y 2009	Y 2010	Y 2011	Y 2012	Y 2013	Y 2014
Total undesignated funds and WSCF related resource	590	548	637	578	515	514

Numbers in thousand US\$



If we focus on one of the major partners funding the core budget (EMW), we will find that the grant is declining every year. We will present the numbers in both currencies – in US\$ which we use for our accounts and in Euro which we received from the partner. This is to avoid misleading numbers due to the currency exchange rate so in the table we give both currencies but in the graph we give only the Euros to see the real trend of the numbers.

Year	Y 2009	Y 2010	Y 2011	Y 2012	Y 2013	Y 2014
Grant in thousand US\$	306	289	334	267	270	262
Grant in thousand Euros	235	235	230	215	205	200

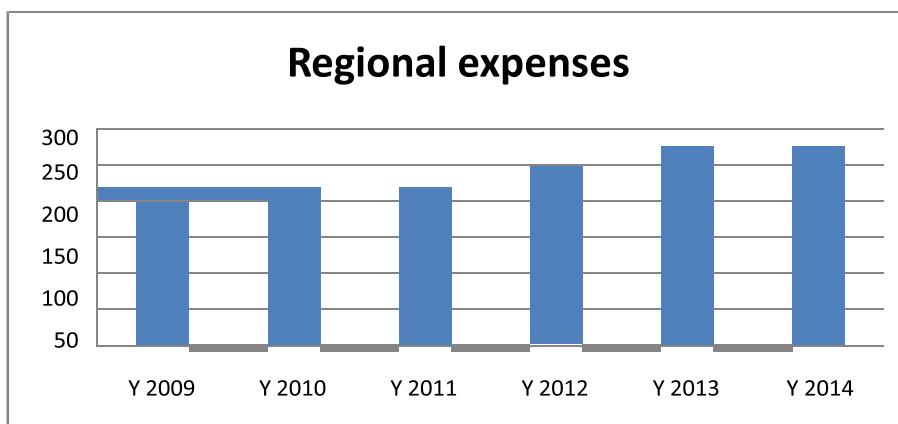


II) The Increase in administration expenses:

The federation had increased the budget line in the regional offices for two reasons: first, the re-launch of the North America office which is very important for the life of the federation; and second, the personal and executive committees adopted a salary review process to make sure of the fairness of the salaries paid to the staff and to ensure staff stability in the federation.

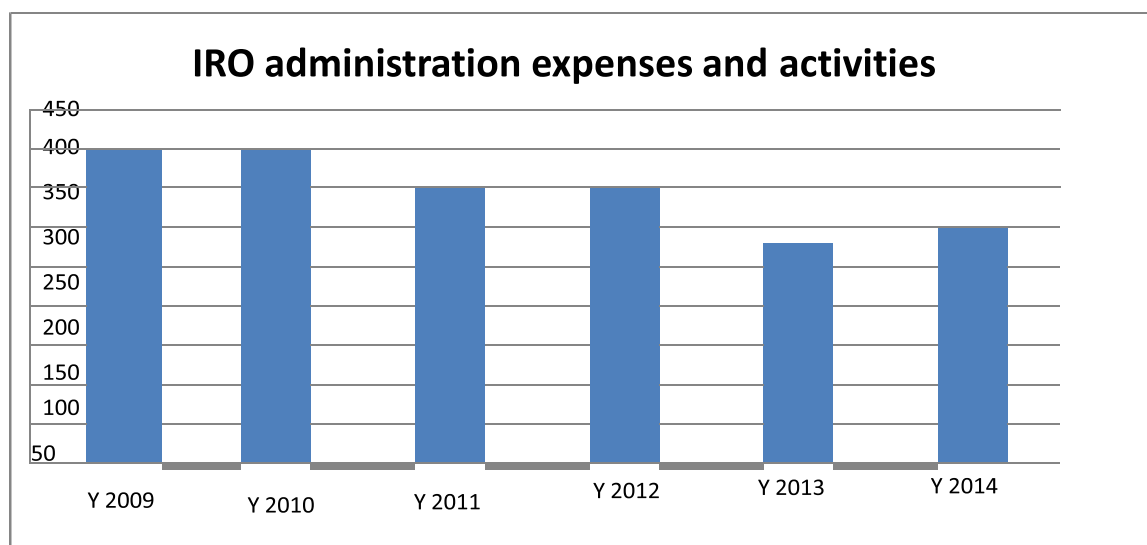
Year	Y 2009	Y 2010	Y 2011	Y 2012	Y 2013	Y 2014
Regional expenses	200	212	222	247	273	275.6

- No in thousands US\$



We are trying our best to control the expenses at IRO level and here is a table presenting the administrative expenses in the IRO, including the salaries for the General Secretary and her accountant and administrative assistant and other related expenses like rent, legal costs, publication costs and others.

Year	Y 2009	Y 2010	Y 2011	Y 2012	Y 2013	Y 2014
IRO administration expenses and activities	402	403	359	357	274	284



III. Dependency on small no of external sources:

Depending on a small number of donors is a big disadvantage in the federation and exposes us to a great financial risk which we must struggle to change.

IV. WCC debts and the cash flow situation:

As we explained before, due to the accumulated deficit over the years we didn't have any assets (cash) to pay our monthly expenses, and this is particularly clear at the beginning of the year when we were awaiting grant support so that means we are in short of cash in the first months of the year when we have depended on the cash advance from the WCC and the CF.

We should note that the WCC, due to its own financial challenges, can no longer advance any more cash; on the contrary, they have asked us to payback the debt we owe them and after negotiation with the WCC, helped by the involvement of the CF in the process, it was agreed to pay back the debt due to them during the financial year 2015 on an equal monthly basis. This is a difficulty and at the same time a big challenge we need to overcome.

B. Factors helping our financial stability:

I.) The Red Book:

The federation has an ongoing problem which is that its WSCF accounts reflect the IRO accounts only and most of the IRO expenditure is on salaries and administration. It has no effective detail on program expenditure which takes place at regional level and is accounted for in respected regional financial reports. Up to recently we have been unable, for many reasons, to provide a reliable set of consolidated accounts. For the first time, we have been able to do this in the recent Red Book which has been a great achievement and points the way to greater transparency and accountability in the future.

II.) Centennial fund (CF):

The support of the CF has been crucial to the financial survival of WSCF. Its undifferentiated grant support has carried the federation through recent cutbacks in other grant aid, it has provided cash support to tie us over cash-flow problems and it has helped us in our negotiations with the WCC on restructuring our debt. Let me thank all our friends on the CF board for all they are doing for the federation.

III.) Give one be one:

The Exco has decided to launch the campaign *Give one Be one*. This is a great idea and I hope that we can make it succeed throughout all our regions. If we can, the goal of financial sustainability for the WSCF is attainable. I dream that one day, this internal resource will provide a significant amount of funds to support the federation's operational life.

C) Challenges :

I.) The Federation's financial future:

As we explained before the real situation of the federation is very critical but I believe with the Exco's wisdom, hard work and commitment it has shown over the last six months, and with the continued support of all the senior friends that are gathered here in the assembly, and not forgetting the crucial help of the Centennial Fund, I am confident that the Future of the Federation Task Group and the work it will do in the coming days at this important assembly will mark a great turning point in the federation's life and place it back on the road to sustainability and effectiveness.

II.) General crisis:

The crisis that the federation is not only unique but we all know that the whole ecumenical bodies experience difficulties so we need to face and accept the challenge as much as sister organization.

III.) General Assembly :

The General Assembly is the most important gathering in the life of the WSCF as it provides the authority for all we do. In the intervening years, the life of the WSCF continues through its national movements but the General Assembly is essential to our common life as a global organization. However, it is a very expensive event and is greatly challenging on resources of all kinds, financial, human, time etc. At the present time, it is exhausting the federation financially and of course you all know that we had to postponed this Assembly from August 2014 to February 2015 due to the lack of sufficient funds and also moving to a lower season in the airfares was a great help.

Collective Efforts:

The financial stability and future success of our federation lies in the collective efforts, thoughts and contributions of each and every GA delegate, Exco member, officer, senior friend, staff member, partner and task group.

We have to harness all our knowledge and expertise to lead the Federation into a healthy and stable financial situation. The tasks that still lie ahead in the new quadrennium are many and our financial resources are limited. We need to put our hands together for the future of the Federation. We have to work as a team and respond to GOD's calling in our time and Hear his voice to have our best Vision and Dreams for the Federation, He has promised us that we shall see Visions.

In conclusion, I would to express my thanks to my fellow officers for their support and the IRO staff, the accountant and regional staff for their cooperation. I hope that you all are sharing with me the same feeling of our God's call to each one of us to work for his Vision for our Future.

What is unique in our federation is that it is a student movement spreading all over the world. For me the heart of the Federation is its National Movements.

You are the Federation. You are the Future

Thanks to you all Honorary Treasurer Youhanna Kamal Bogota Colombia

Feb 2015

Appendix 4: Regional Report from Africa

WSCF AFRICA REPORT
to the 35th General Assembly of WSCF
February 27 to March 5, 2015
Bogotá, Colombia

INTRODUCTION

We thank God in Jesus Christ's name for his love and mercy, for calling us to serve him through World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) at various levels, capacities, positions, with different gifts and talents which all together contributed to the success of WSCF. God has been faithful and good to us all the times especially during our engagement in WSCF work in Africa during the period of 2008 – 2014.

“If the LORD had not been on our side, let Israel say.” Psalm 124:1

We are humbly submitting this report to WSCF General Assembly.

During the period 2008 – 2014, WSCF Africa Regional Office located in Nairobi, Kenya continued with her mandate to oversee and coordinate the ecumenical work of WSCF Africa, enhancing communication and working with 27 Student Christian Movements in Africa, (21 Affiliated; 6 Associated) and 3 Contact Points with approximately 400,000 members. One of the key functions of WSCF Africa regional office is to facilitate the process of strengthening and ensuring the growth of the Student Christian Movements throughout the continent. At the same time the National SCMs continued with the work of reaching and working with SCM members in respective schools and colleges.

The work done includes the life of SCM in Bible Studies and theological analysis, joint masses and prayers, Easter conferences and national conferences, implementation of projects, the Africa Regional Committee Meeting (ARC), movements visitations and networking with other Ecumenical and development organizations.

The areas we worked on includes:

- Bible Study and Theology
- Africa Regional Committee Meeting (ARC)
- WSCF Africa Executive Committee Meetings
- Gender Advocacy Training
- Leadership Trainings and Leadership Consultative Workshops
- Capacity Building Training on Lobbying & Advocacy
- Training on Combating HIV & AIDS through SSDDIM Reduction and SAVE promotion.
- WSCF Africa challenging illegal migration
- Sensitization and capacity building on stopping Climate Change
- Trainings on Food security
- Trainings and activities on Peace Building and Reconciliation activities
- Fight against Corruption
- Movements visitations
- Networking with other Ecumenical and development organizations

WSCF AFRICA REGIONAL CONTEXT

We are working in the rich continent where its people experience poverty due to various reasons which include but not limited to:

- Unfair global/international business conditions and policies
- Failure by Africa governments to tap and exploit resources to the maximum due to internal and external reasons and barriers.
- Girls forced to early marriages and polygamous marriages due to poverty or harmful cultural practice
- Disease such as Malaria, HIV and AIDS, the recent outbreak of Ebola in Liberia, Sierra Leon and neighbor countries have claimed the lives of people and affected the economic and social development
- Lack of access to quality education
- Untapped and unutilized youth manpower and vigor to work

- Unemployment problem due to lack of entrepreneurship skills, unfavorable policies and education systems that do not provide capacity for youth to employ themselves and create employments. We take note that unemployment is still a global problem, in Africa in particular. According to the UN World Youth Report in 2012 and International Labor Organization (ILO) report 2012, 202 million people were not employed worldwide but youth counted 40% of the world unemployment. Close to 75 million youth worldwide were unemployed in 2012. It has to be noted that in the same year, 17% of the global population were youth between the age of 15 – 24 (1.2 billion out of 7.1 billion of global population) of which 87% of youth live in developing countries including our region. The unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at 22.8%. Also the ILO report 2013 reveals 73 million young people are estimated to be unemployed in 2013 (of which 90% live in developing countries including Africa countries). This situation contributes to some youth engaging in prostitution, drugs and alcohol abuse which are some of the contributors to the spread of HIV and AIDS.
- In search of greener pastures and better living standards, some youth decide to immigrate illegally where many die on the way in the process of crossing deserts and seas. Some youth who try to engage themselves in self-employment face challenges such as inadequate knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship and business development, market, insufficient capital, lack of skills for value addition and unavailability of policies or unexecuted policies favoring youth self-employment. Also, some self-employment activities carried out by youth and other members of communities such as tree cutting for firewood, charcoal burning, agricultural activities and bricks making along the river banks lead to environmental vulnerability and climate change.
- Due to their vulnerability, some youth are easily convinced to join malicious groups and perpetuate violence and killings for example Boko Haram in Nigeria who abducted more than 200 girls in 2014, Al Shabab claimed attacks have claimed the lives of many people in these countries, just to mention a few. In 2013 incident at West Gate in Nairobi, more than 60 people were killed in a bomb blast. Outbreak of war in the Central African Republic and South Sudan are among the incidences which claimed the lives of the people and affected our member countries and humanity at large.

Due to this situation in the context where WSCF Africa is working, we feel obliged to increase our efforts in various interventions and come up with more and new interventions in Peace Building and Reconciliation, Climate Change Mitigation, Campaign against Illegal Migration, Combating HIV and AIDS, Gender Advocacy, Leadership Capacity Building, Agriculture and Food Security, Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment to youth and other members of the communities.

SOME EXAMPLES/SAMPLES OF THE PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED

A. BIBLE STUDY AND THEOLOGY

As previously mentioned, Bible Study and Theological analysis is part and parcel of the life of SCM members.

Students need to read the Bible as a source of their spiritual inspirations for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to academic communities by words and through their lives. To be able to do so, they have to accept and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Savior of their lives.

SCM Nigeria publishes the Bible Scripture Reading guide every year in cooperation with WSCF Africa region office for some years.

In 2012, the Bible studies were conducted in line with WSCF theme on Economic Justice. The guideline was provided to SCMs to make reflections on justice. Isaiah 58: 6 – 8 was a basic reading for reflections.

In 2013, the Bible Study theme and Exegetical guideline for theological reflection was on Gender Justice, this was also reflected during the ARC in Kampala

B. AFRICA REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING; KAMPALA UGANDA 28 - 30 MARCH 2013

The Africa Regional Committee (ARC) meeting was held in Kampala 28th to 30th of March, 2013, the election of the new Executive Committee members and new Regional Secretary was part of the business during the ARC. Apart from receiving Regional Secretary's report, the Treasurer's report and the report from the WSCF Africa representatives to the World Executive Committee, the ARC set a direction for the work of the federation in Africa for the coming four years.

The ARC accepted the application of Christian Youth Association of Malawi (CYAMA) and approved CYAMA to be affiliated to WSCF Africa Region and recommended for affiliation with WSCF during the 35th General Assembly in Bogota, Colombia.

SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES:

- i.) Peace Building and Reconciliation training for South Sudan SCM in 2010, 2012 and Leadership Consultative Meeting in 2014.
- ii.) A Sub Regional Training on Illegal immigration, Gender and Human Rights was conducted in Accra Ghana 10th - 15th of November 2012 for SCMs from Central and West Africa.
- iii.) Training on Gender Advocacy and Leadership Training to 24 SCM representatives from SCMs in Africa region, Kampala, Uganda 28th – 30th March 2013
- iv.) Southern Africa Sub – Region Training on combating HIV and AIDS through SSDDIM Reduction and SAVE Promotion, Harare – Zimbabwe, 8th – 12th October 2013. The training provided a comprehensive understanding and discussion on SSDDIM (Stigma, Shame, Discrimination, Denial, Inaction and Misacting as we believe we cannot overcome the HIV pandemic without eliminating SSDDIM. Also the training provided a comprehensive understanding on SAVE approach and space for open discussion and understanding about sex, sexuality and gender in the context of HIV.
- v.) Training on Lobbying and Advocacy to Kenya SCM, Scout Youth and YMCA & visit to UN offices in Nairobi – Kenya, 30 – 31/08/2013
- vi.) SCM Côte d'Ivoire (Association Chrétienne des Elèves et Etudiants Protestants de Côte d'Ivoire - AC-CEPCI) provides accomodation services to University Student at affordable rates at the Protestant House for Students (Maison Protestante de l'Etudiant - MAPE) in Abidjan. Also runs a recording studio

producing Bible Study series and other educative materials to young people. Also runs a Library and a project on sensitization to youth and community on HIV and AIDS.

vii.) SCM Zimbabwe, among other programs conducts Civic Education and Peace

viii.) Building events/ activities

ix.) SCM Malawi produces Quarterly News Letter on SCM work

x.) SCM Togo (Association Chrétienne des Elèves et Etudiants du Togo –ACCEET) members meet regularly at their own office building for Bible Studies in Lome. Also owns a plot which will be used for the construction of a youth centre.

xi.) SCM Tanzania (Tanzania Student Christian Fellowship – TSCF) conducts Easter Conferences and a National Conference of up to 1,000 youth every year. TSCF own a 50 acre land for future development. Also SCM Namibia and other SCMs have such regular big conferences.

C. NETWORKING AND COLLABORATIONS

WSCF Africa region works in collaboration with various ecumenical and Development organizations. Some of the engagements include:

- i.) All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Jubilee Assembly in Kampala – Uganda 01 – 08 June 2013:
- ii.) Religions for Peace Youth Pre-Assembly and the 9th Religions for Peace World Assembly, Vienna, Austria, 19th – 22nd November, 2013.
- iii.) World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Water Network activities.
- iv.) Meetings on Framework for Dialogue between Religious leaders and People Living with HIV & AIDS (PLHA), Facilitated by Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) and KENERELA Nairobi – Kenya
- v.) Taking part in the EAA Strategy Group on HIV & AIDS 2014 – 2017

D. CHALLENGES

- i.) Some movements are not able to hire and run the national offices for the SCMs.
- ii.) Inadequate resources and capacity of SCMs to run their activities and reach the quick growing number of SCM members.
- iii.) Lack of financial resources to engage in programs and projects.
- iv.) Some governments banned the religious activities at the schools/Universities
- v.) In some countries churches have reduced or withdrawn their financial and human resources.
- vi.) Communication difficulties in trickling down the information from Regional Office to SCM members at school/university.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WSCF PRIORITIES

WSCF Africa Region (movements) recommends to the GA to include the following as priorities for the coming four years:

- i.) Enhancing youth opportunities for the young graduate and other youth through providing entrepreneurship skills, enterprise development, savings groups and seed funds before entering the job market. These diaconia interventions will also serve as a building strategy where youth vulnerability to terrorist and other malicious groups will be reduced.
- ii.) Instituting an intervention that curtails all forms of human trafficking and discourages illegal migrations by advocating for greater access to resources by all people in Africa. This includes advocacy for fair trade and aid conditionality between African nations and other funding bodies.
- iii.) Advocate for greater access for quality education for the girl child and other vulnerable groups through agitating for more national and international funding.
- iv.) Gender justice and equality as it relates to discouraging early and forced marriages and harmful practices/culture in African countries.

F. CONCLUSION:

We once again thank God who has been with us during this period, thanks to IRO, other WSCF Regions, partners and friends who supported our work. We thank you all for listening.

Submitted by,

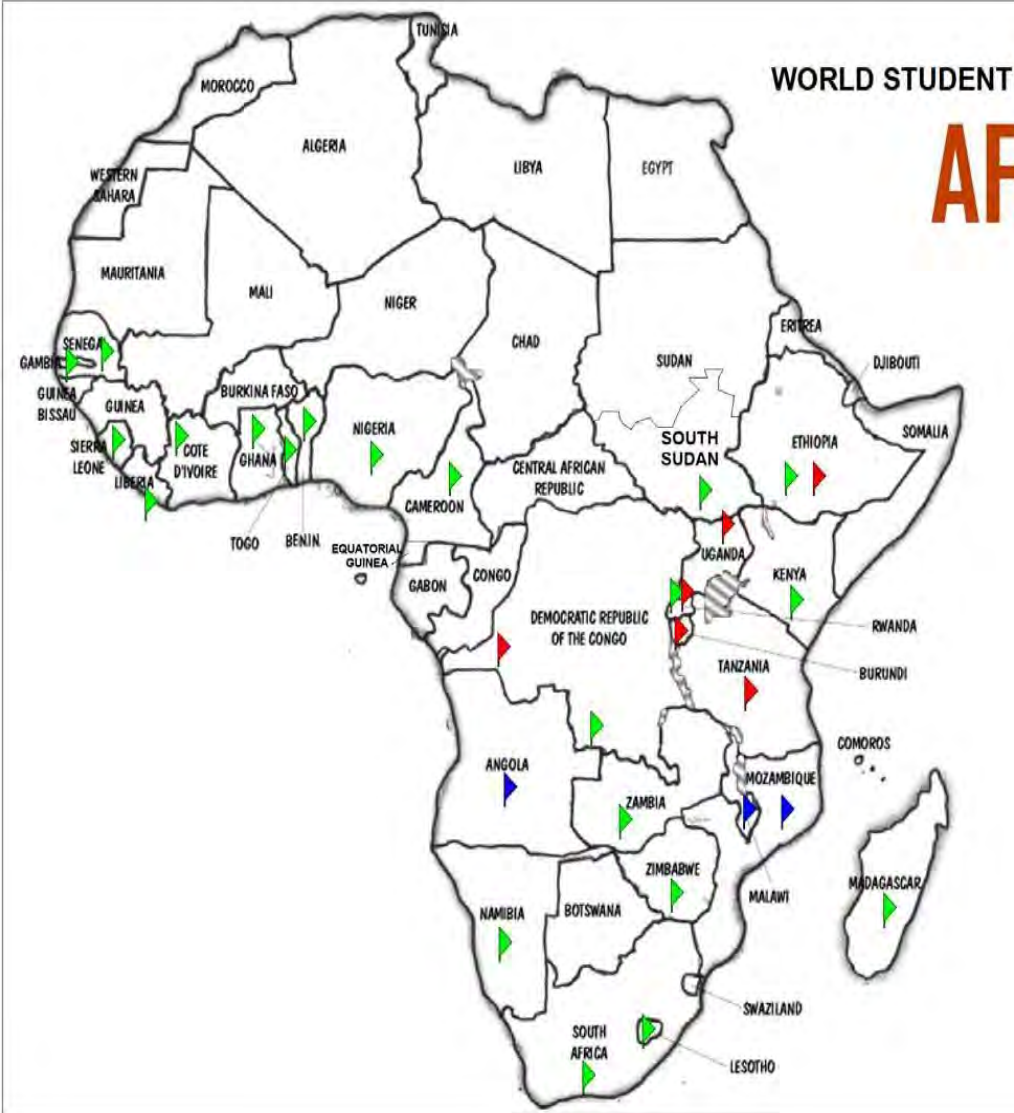
Rev. Amos Kamugisha Mushendwa,

Regional Secretary,

WSCF Africa Region.

WORLD STUDENT

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Appendix 5: Regional Report from Asia Pacific

WSCF ASIA PACIFIC REPORT
to the 35th General Assembly of WSCF
February 27 to March 5, 2015
Bogotá, Colombia

Peace greetings to the delegates, senior friends, partners, guests, observers of the 35th General Assembly of the WSCF. I hereby present you the report of the Asia Pacific region from 2008 to 2014. For many reasons, this General Assembly will be remembered as a historic Assembly, which I will discuss later in my report. And hence, I would like to start my report with a historical perspective of the Ecumenical youth and student Movement.

Historic Legacy of Ecumenical Youth Movement:

Looking back into the history, students and youth have shaped the life of Ecumenism world over. In 1948, the World Council of Churches (WCC) was formed, as a fellowship of churches, to cater to provide an ecumenical platform to the Protestant and Orthodox Churches around the world. However, much before the formation of the WCC, the students and youths had taken their initiatives to establish many global ecumenical platform. In a way the students and youth who paved the way towards the formation of the WCC, including taking leadership in its formation. The following youth and student associations are some of the pioneers in this, including our very own World Student Christian Federation:

- World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations (1855)
- World Young Women's Christian Association (1894)
- World Student Christian Federation (1895).
- The first World Conference of Christian Youth (1939)
- Formation of the World Council of Churches (1948)

Certainly, it is Ecumenical students and youth movement which pioneered many more ecumenical alliance across the world. Quite aptly the *First Life and Work Conference, Stockholm 1925* declared:

"We turn to the young of all countries. With keen appreciation we have heard of their aspirations and efforts for a better social order as expressed in the youth movements of many lands. We desire to enlist the ardour and energy of youth, the freshness and fullness of their life, in the service of the kingdom of God and humanity."

Students and youth throughout history have witnessed to bring change and dreaming for a transformed world. Even in today, we can see the spark in the dynamism of the youth. The most recent Pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, which has shown the world the power of a peaceful demonstration with hundreds of thousands of students in a nonviolent manner protesting a government, which has been trying to stifle the voices of dissent and violate their rights to choose their own leaders, being the core of any democracy! *Furthermore the students in Taiwan occupied the parliament to protest against a trade pact with China, Pork Barrel campaign in the Philippines with regards to the inappropriateness of government spending for localized projects secured primarily to bring money to a representative's district, etc* The students and youth played a prophetic role in the recent Delhi election (New Delhi, the Union Territory) of India. Their hard work in mobilising voters in a self-less voluntary way has given a landslide victory to an "common man's party" committed to end the culture of divisive politics and the "VIP culture" of privileged class in politics and thereby have shown a hope to create a violence and corruption free society. In all the above stories, the students and youth had taken prominent role in ushering pro-democratic governments.

Students and Youth of WSCF-AP in Today's context

Having such a historic legacy, one cannot undermine the potentialities of the students and youth. Particularly in the AP region which is not only one of the biggest member constituencies of the WSCF but also the oldest ecumenical student movement. Recently four of our SCMs (India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan) witnessed the 100 years of their ecumenical journey among the student communities. Therefore, it is all the more important that the students and youths continue to be aware of the contemporary social realities of our societies and are challenged by them to respond through reflection and action. The WSCF provides that unique platform through the Student Christian Movements (SCMs) in more than 100 countries. Particularly, in Asia, having one of the highest numbers of SCMs in as many as 20 countries, the WSCF Asia Pacific has tremendous potentialities to empower, challenge and channel the students towards a transformative action for a just world. It is much more significant to work among students and youth as 60% of the population of the regions are youth. That is a significant majority in our societies and therefore they are already shaping our societies, as *"the students and youth are not the future leaders, but they are today's leaders and the future of our world is in their hands!"*

It is vital for the WSCF-AP to remain relevant to a fast changing context. WSCF is a unique movement of students and youths, helping to the Christian students and youths which can influence and shape them in their formative years towards ecumenism.

Most of you will agree with me that through the SCMs, WSCF has played a significant role in our lives, in developing our perspectives, enabling our critical thinking, shaping our life to affirm justice, and peace, and inspiring us to play a prophetic role in the Church and Society.

Whether it was Local, National, Regional or Inter-regional level programmes and initiatives of WSCF - it has contributed profoundly in our personal transformation as well as in our own communities. That is why the work of WSCF among the students and youth becomes very critical and almost indispensable. WSCF must continue to respond to the call to enable the youth to play a prophetic role in responding to challenges of our time.

Hence, WSCF AP is committed to continue the work among the student communities to promote and produce more ecumenical leaders to fulfil the prophesy of Isaiah "your sons and daughters shall prophecy".

The challenge before us is that, there is an increase dwindling of resources to help us continue the journey. The WSCF AP region as well as the WSCF global are going through a financial crisis, as we all are aware of!

In this context, there are many questions before us, which directly pose a challenge to remain relevant to the changing context – both in terms of issues and in terms of resources:

- How do we continue our activities, programmes and interventions with an ever dwindling resources?
- How do we raise resources within the region to support our initiatives for movement building?
- How do we encourage more and more students to get involved in the work of our Federation?
- How to remain relevant to a fast changing context?

In spite of these seemingly discouraging scenarios before us, I hope this GA will grapple with these questions, issues and challenges and come up with creative response.

35th General Assembly: We are many, we are one: Sent Out to Build God's Peace

The 35th GA is crucial for the whole federation, as it is taking place in the midst of severe financial challenges. There are fears and uncertainties looming large in the minds of the officers, executive members and the staff. But at the same time, this crucial moment is encouraging us to work more closely and collectively to respond to these challenges. This GA should reflect what it means to be one in a diverse contexts and reality? Can we reaffirm that in spite of our differences as a federation we are one in our collective mission and vision. We are hopeful that after the GA we will go back to our region with new hopes, affirmation and renewed spirit to be more committed to witness Christ in an ever challenging world.

SCMs in the AP region

The collective strength of WSCF is its national constituencies (SCMs) student base spread across 20 countries in AP. They are: Australia SCM, SCM Aotearoa / New Zealand, Bangladesh SCM, Bhutan SCM, Cambodia SCM, East Timor SCM, Hong Kong SCM, India SCM, Indonesia SCM, Japan SCM, Korean Student Christian Federation, Malaysia SCM, SCM Nepal, Myanmar SCM, SCM Pakistan, SCM Philippines, Singapore SCM, Sri Lanka SCM, Taiwan SCM, and Thailand SCM.

Fiji SCM, and Papua New Guinea SCMs are under revival process.

Regional Office is located in Hong Kong with a small number of staff team. Two full time staff - Regional Secretary, Regional Women's Coordinator (Ms. Nina Nayoan from SCM Indonesia (GMKI)) and a Part time accountant/ bookkeeper- Hong Kong person, and a mission intern from GBGM (General Board of Global Mission) Ms. Angela Ali .

Asia Pacific is diverse, hence the SCMs are diverse and unique from each other in terms of expressing their faith reflections, programmes/ activities and the organisational structure and leadership. This diversity also create space to celebrate and affirm our differences.

Challenges for the work of the WSCF in the region:

While the Federation in Asia & Pacific region addresses several challenges and issues through its interventions. I am not going to make a context analysis here but However, I would like to highlight some of the major challenges we have come across in the recent past, from the previous assembly, until now. Some of them are:

- Declining student membership and less participation of senior friends in the life of the Federation
- High competitive academic studies for students focusing on market driven career :Commercialization and privatization of Education
- Changing funding patterns from the Resource Agencies
- Increase in dwindling resources in the wake of economic recession: funding partners cutting or stopping funding to the work of the federation
- WSCF has got a unique constituency, the students which is a floating population and therefore it is not easy to see the impact on them in the short term.
- We want to bring in small changes in beliefs and ideologies inspired by the mission and vision of the Federation among the primary reference group of the federation, i.e., the students. However, our partner agencies who support us financially want to see tangible changes on the so called “beneficiaries” – in our case the students! It is not easy to assess the impact of our work among the students, who are a floating population, rather than on a community with whom an organisation works for years together, who more or less remain within a fixed geographical area over a period of time.
- Religious extremism, fundamentalist and the popularity of evangelical groups in the campus: While there are extremists in every religion including Christianity, there have been an upsurge in the extremist groups e.g., the ISIS, which is killing people mercilessly in the name of a particular religion. There has been acts of terrorism linked to religions. When it comes to Christianity, even though we come a long way from the days of the Christian crusades, we still have the ultra-evangelical radical Christians, who are only concerned about the “life after death” , ignoring completely the “life, here and now” .
- There is an increase in the popularity of the evangelical groups in the campus. The students and youths could have been made aware of the values, belief and ideologies of the Federation, but are being deprived of it.
- Lack of human resources in the regional office: As mentioned earlier, there is a small team of 2 programme staff including the Regional Secretary, a part time accountant and an intern. However, the Regional Office has to cover 20 countries with activities and also publishing & distributing the monthly. This limitation of lack of human resources, puts the staff under extreme pressure and challenges the limits of their capacity.

The work of the region is guided by the Vision and Mission of the Federation

The WSCF is a global community of Student Christian Movements committed to dialogue, ecumenism, social justice and peace. Our mission is to empower students in critical thinking and constructive transformation of our world being a space for prayer and celebration, theological reflection, study and analysis of social and cultural process and solidarity and action across boundaries of culture, gender and ethnicity. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, The WSCF is called to be prophetic witness in Church and society. The vision is nurtured by a radical hope for God’s reign in history.

WSCF Asia Pacific has SCMs in 20 countries in Asia and the Pacific, deeply rooted in the local contexts. Providing a unique space for young people across diverse denominational, ethnic, cultural, political background to learn and share a common vision for the ecumenical movement, church and society through a number of relevant programs and activities. Under the motto of the WSCF "That All May Be One" WSCF AP carries out programmes and activities which ensure to restore peace, justice and human dignity for all the creation of God.

WSCF's target groups are students/young people, young age is a time willing to adopt new ideas; challenges are taken up against orthodoxy; stagnant belief patterns and social structures are questioned; and steps are taken to change the society. It is interesting to see that Jesus Christ had also done his ministry at the peak of his young age. Hence, WSCF is confidence to translate its vision into a reality.

The main Themes and Issues addressed by the AP region

The Asia Pacific region, home to one of the greatest philosophical heritage of 'Ahimsa' – Non Violence grabs the world headlines today for its context of growing conflicts, violence and internal tensions between multi-cultural communities pose major challenges to peaceful living in the region. Apart from the conflict situations, the growing religious and ethnic conflict, military occupation, fundamentalism, poverty, discrimination based on class, caste, gender, economic disparity, that deny just political participation and the right to live with self-respect and dignity. Corruption and criminalization of politics has become structural issues that mostly cause further marginalization of the poor and marginalized section of the society. Violence is on the rise. Thus, most of the excluded and disadvantaged communities are subjected to increasing violence, and human rights violation both by the State and Non-state actors. Some key issues are addressed by the AP region are:

- **Violation of human rights**

During the past few years, we have witnessed growing communal tensions and ethnic conflicts particularly in Myanmar, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand Cambodia between the majority religion and minority religion, the twenty five years of armed conflict between the LTTE and Sri Lankan Army is yet to unveil the clear picture of untold human sufferings. The extra judicial killings and forced disappearance in the Philippines has taken lives of many human rights activists and community workers. Furthermore, the government of many Asia Pacific countries define migration is development, hence exporting many poor people particularly women to the economically privileged countries to work as domestic helpers. Asia Pacific is also rich in natural resources, hence many government aiming to boost their economy by selling these resources to private companies. Hence, mining companies are welcomed with open arms to extract the natural resource which has caused huge displacement among the tribal and Dalit communities.

- **Violence against Women**

Discrimination and violence against women is a reality and it is found in every country, cutting across boundaries of culture, class, caste, education, income, ethnicity and age. Most of our societies are patriarchal, hierarchical and biased against women. Violence experienced by women and girls is extensive and continues to be a global epidemic. Mainly most of the Asian countries' context violence against women is not only based on gender but its generated and sanctioned by the religion, culture, custom/tradition, ethnicity etc. which is influenced and dominated by the patriarchal system. When it comes to religion, Christi-

anity is not exception to this. The androcentrism or male centeredness is very much felt within the Christian theology and women leadership within the Church. The intersection of the problem is having multiple negative implications in the lives of women and pushing them to live with abject poverty, exploitation and exclusion from the mainstream society. As a result women confront physical, psychological, sexual and economical exploitation of the growing phenomenon of migration, illegal trafficking, prostitutions, militarism etc. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violations, denying women and girls rights to development and dignity.

- **Eco-Justice –Indigenous people’s rights and land justice**

The greed of human kind has prompted it to exploit mother-nature to its maximum, for their own survival. In the name of development and urbanization process, forests are being cleared up, dams are built which submerges forests and displaces people in the vicinity, mining industries are displacing indigenous people from their habitats. The whole idea of an anthropocentric development model has left the creation, groaning and the poor and marginalized have been uprooted. Asia Pacific region has been the hotbed of injustice to the eco-system and exploitation of indigenous people.

- **War and Militarization: Peace and Reconciliation**

The Asia Pacific region continues to suffer from conflicts and war, violence and threats to, peace and human security. In the present context of the Global Financial Crisis, existing conflicts are escalating and people’s vulnerabilities are being aggravated. Recently, countries in South Asia, North East Asia and that of the Middle East, have been highlighted in the global arena due to the conflict and violent situations in the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and also the boarders of Israel and Palestine. The ethnic conflicts, civil wars, communal and political violence in the south Asia region in particular have made this region rather unstable where almost daily occurrences of bombings, violent assaults have devastated innocent lives and property.

In the Philippines, South Korea, Japan and other nations they are directly experiencing this in terms of increased US military presence and pressure on their governments to obey the rule or support this. There are also significant effects on the environment and local people.

- **Commercialization of Education**

Article 26 of the UDHR discusses in length the right to education and its pivotal role in promoting a just and humane society. Art. 26 Section 2 of UDHR states, “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.” Yet the right to education has always been in peril. Most countries in the Asia-Pacific region suffer from various issues that deprive students their fundamental right to accessible and affordable education. With the onslaught of privatization and commercialization of educational institutions coupled with years of government under spending for education, the call for a unified and intensified struggle for education has become more and more relevant. Commercialization of education further takes the right of education away from those who are in or below the poverty threshold. Education is now a mere business enterprise, a profit-making venue. Commercialized education is market-driven and not necessarily for the development of a person or the society.

- **Capacity Building Training to strengthen movements**

The WSCF has distinct recognition of being a pioneer body engaged in creative mobilization of the energy and interest of the youth, most in particular, the student community. The learning and experiences garnered from the close association with the students enables WSCF to prioritize the felt needs of students, Substantive issues that are relevant to National, regional and global context are always discussed as such to assess the existing capacity and current approaches, based on which prioritization of capacity building needs is recommended. Building the capacity of the students indicate critical growth and change in ability leading to efficient functioning of the member SCMs, which ultimately shall equip and capacitate the Church and society in God's Mission.

Through WSCF work the AP region contributes to primarily 3 areas and they are:

a) Serving the Community

During the regional level programme one of the important area is live with the communities. The students visited and lived with many communities in different countries of AP region. Some of them are mentioned below:

- Chengara community struggle for the right to land in Kerala – India
- The community in Dinkia village, fighting against the South Korean Steel plant -POSCO - Odisha, India
- The San Roque community and the community in Freedom Island – Philippines
- Pat Pong – the sex industry – in Bangkok, Thailand
- Communities in Point Pedro, the Moors Community – Jaffna, Sri Lanka
- Community of “Comfort Women” in South Korea
- Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) – boarder of South and North Korea
- People living in “Cage House” in Hong Kong
- The shelter for domestic helper in Hong Kong

The students had spent time with these communities to hear their stories and understand the realities of the problem. The students bring their stories to share with their communities and some continue to work with the community to support in various ways.

b) Solidarity and advocacy

WSCF AP region with the SCMs have responded peace, justice and human rights concerns in local and regional level. We have advocated on the justice issues of Human Rights for all, Rights of Indigenous and Farmers for their ancestral lands, ecological justice, education, peace building, pro-democracy, against communal violence, against ethnic conflicts, violence against migrant workers (domestic helpers), against nuclear power plants and weapons, against war and militarism. Some of the major Solidarity and Advocacy work by the WSCF AP are:

- The Umbrella Movement by the students and people of Hong Kong for pro-democracy in Hong Kong

- Joined the international community in solidarity for a peaceful reconciliation and reunification of the South and North Korea.
- Education Not For Sale – against commercialization and privatization of education
- Support the just cause of villagers in Odisha, India against POSCO steel project through the anti-POSCO movement.
- In Solidarity with Irom Sharmila (an activist from north east India) for the campaign to abolish AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Power's Act)) of India - an Act which allows the security forces to shoot at sight, and arrest anyone without a warrant and occupy civilian communities in north east India.
- A Call to Stand in Solidarity with Erwiana (the Indonesian domestic helper in Hong Kong) and All Migrant (Domestic) Workers to Stop Modern Day Slavery
- 16 Days of Activism campaign on Violence against Women
- Say NO to NUCLEAR POWER and DESTRUCTIVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS
- Solidarity with the Palestine
- Free the Morong 43 campaign in the Philippines
- Free Burma, Free all Political Prisoners

c) Biblical and Theological Analysis and Reflection

Theological Formation is integral in the work, programs and meetings of WSCF AP. Contextual Bible studies, Bible studies from various perspectives, Biblical Theological Reflections are integrated in every programmes and activities. There are initiatives to enable the SCM leaders to develop Skills on critical reading of bible texts. However, we have devoted a specific women's program called Women Doing Theology (WDT), primarily to train lay young women to do feminist theology. The WDT is a feminist hermeneutics to read the bible from the perspectives of women. The WDT has been pioneered by the WSCF-AP in the ecumenical movement today. The AP region prepares liturgical resources for the National movements to observe specific international events. Time to time the Bible studies, Biblical Theological Reflections are shared through the journal and eNews of WSCF AP.

Some initiatives to strengthen the capacities of the SCMs in the region

a) Capacity Building Training(CBT) for the SCM leaders

The CBT was organized to bring together frontline student leaders/ national coordinators, general secretaries from 20 SCM member countries, with their enhanced capacities to act as ambassadors of the WSCF to bring quality change in Institutional leadership, management of their respective chapters and at the same time derive the benefits of equal opportunity, dignity, peace and justice. The CBT was planned to address the need of the leaders of various SCMs. Such as:

- Movement building
- Fundraising skills and strategies

- Skills on Communications, Organizational leadership and management
- Critical thinking and Analysis of the regional and global issues and focus on the wider trends in Christianity in Asia ex: Fundamentalism and evangelism
- Skills on critical reading of bible texts
- Ecumenism/Ecumenical Movement
- PMER(Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting)

b) Joint initiatives with national SCMs – One of the regular joint initiatives with the national SCMs is the Joint Women’s Programme. The national movements own the programme and this is an opportunity to accommodate more SCMerS from the national movements. .

c) Annual Leadership Development Programmes with the SCMs - Each year the AP region brings together the leaders of SCMs for the following leadership development programmes. Each regional level programme is hosted by the leadership of a national movement:

- Women Doing Theology
- Human Rights Justice and Peace
- Capacity Building Training
- School for Ecumenical Leadership Formation

National Movements Work

WSCF has successfully produced a worldwide resource base - student cadre through its Advocacy and Solidarity campaign and extensive Capacity Development process. It is the national movements in the grassroots which come into play when there is a need to address regional and global issues chosen as a priority by the international student community.

Interfaith cooperation in response to the ethnic conflicts in the country

There are many ethnic groups living together in the country with different cultures, norms, identity and values. The conflict based on ethnic groups and religions are truly sensitive issues for the people of Myanmar. SCM Myanmar created the space to invite young people from different ethnic communities and different religions to initiate dialogue on conflict resolutions. They initiated dialogue on how to reduce or stop ethnic conflict among different ethnic arm forced groups, ethnic communities in the country.

Participated in the movement – “Say NO to Moral and National Education programme by the Hong Kong government”

Students from SCM Hong Kong joined the 10 days protests by the people of Hong Kong mainly students and young people to fight against the Moral and National Education (MNE) curriculum proposed by the Hong Kong government. At the peak of the protest, there were 120,000 people occupying the government headquarter and had finally made the Chief Executive CY Leung to give up implementing the curriculum and making it compulsory to schools in his term of office. This was one of the biggest protest in numbers and spirit by the students in Hong Kong. SCM Hong Kong organized series of discussion forums for students to create awareness of the proposed MNE and also came up with strong statement to express their views.

Continued to campaigned on Education Rights and against ‘Education budget cut’

SCM Philippines is been constantly doing campaign against education budget cut in the country. SCM Philippines joined the nationwide strike against budget cut, demanding government to abide with the UN recommendations to increase the Education budget to at least 6% of the GDP of the country, to meet the international standard. Presently the allocated education budget of the country is less than 3%. The demand was for higher education as well as the whole education system including the basic education in the country.

Participates in the protest to eliminate caste based discrimination.

SCM India members along with program staffs stood for the cause of Dalit Christians and Muslims and participated in a Three Days Hunger strike in Delhi organized by the National Coordination Committee for Dalit Christians (NCCDC) & National Council of Dalit Christians.

Pro-democratic protests in Hong Kong: Umbrella movement

Towards the end of the year 2014, something remarkable happened in Hong Kong. Where hundreds of thousands of university students and youth seized the streets of Hong Kong, demanding their right to choose their own leader, which has been traditionally imposed by China. SCM Hong Kong and the AP region participated in the protests. The images of thousands of students and youth daring the police and their water cannon or pepper spray with as ordinary as an umbrella. This soon became famous as the “umbrella movement” of Hong Kong. We sincerely hope that the values of democracy and human rights will continue to be upheld in the world, even though it is increasingly become a rarity.

Work done at the regional level

WSCF AP continues her global solidarity with the Anti-POSCO Movement in India with SCM Korea, and SCM USA

The Anti-POSCO Movement in Odisha, India is a movement against \$12 billion steel plant project of South Korean company POSCO. The company is aggressively approaching to set up the plant despite strong resistance by the villagers against the steel plant. The anti-POSCO movement supports the struggle for the rights of indigenous and farmers for their ancestral lands in Dinkia village, Jagatsingpur district, Odisha. It is an ongoing effort of WSCF (AP) and SCMs in the AP region particularly in SCM India and SCM Korea (KSCF) – to actively participate in the anti-POSCO movement by engaging students to respond to the issues from the justice perspectives for the affected villagers and for the environmental concerns.

Human Rights Justice and Peace Programme

The Human Rights Defenders Training Workshop for Students aims to provide students with the skills for human rights advocacy work, develop a Human Rights campaign strategy, provide them with human rights framework of analysis by looking at the varied aspects of human rights issues from different perspective.

Specifically, the HRD Training aims to: Better understand the rights of HRDs and mechanisms to protect HRDs at national and international levels; Work for human rights in Asia Pacific countries and gather support in campaigning these issues in the SCMs and churches in the Asia-Pacific region; Acquire and develop skills in the human rights and peace works from the SCMs, church groups, Non-Government Organization(NGO) and Peace Organization(PO) in the Asia Pacific region; Strengthen Human Rights Support Group human rights desk in the SCMs.

Major outcome

- The HRJP (Human Rights Justice and Peace ToTs (Training of Trainers) and the solidarity programmes have sensitized, educated and promoted a community of young students across 20 countries that act to defend and advocate for human dignity, justice and peace in their respective regions;
- It brought together young people in an interactive platform to share and learn the best practices of peace-building and reconciliation, later to be practiced in synergy at par their local context.
- The trainings have capacitated potential peace makers to articulate their rights, privileges and entitlements for policy change in local, regional, national and international level
- Have enabled students to develop theological reflections to articulate their Christian faith from Human Rights perspectives
- The SCMs have joined the Churches and the ecumenical movements and recognize Human Rights, Justice and Peace-building as their mission mandate
- This has fostered close relation with the rights holders to sustain solidarity, advocacy and networking process across the member movement countries and promoted and expanded a global network for Human Rights, Justice and Peace.

Regional Women's Programme (RWP) on Women Doing Theology

Women Doing Theology (WDT) is one of the most significant and distinctive programmes of the Regional Women's Programme (RWP) of WSCF AP. Young women from SCMs in Asia and the Pacific come together, to share life stories, commonalities, and challenges, women experience in various contexts. The platform provide a safe space for the women to reflect, articulate and critically analyze their experiences as women in their own context. The WDT also focuses to critically analyse and challenge the androcentric - mainstream- theology and promote doing theology from the feminist perspectives which are empowering and liberating.

Major Outcome

- RWP provided a common platform to the young women from the National SCMs to share experiences, exchange ideas and plan of actions to advocate effectively on women's issues;
- Enhanced leadership capacities and skills for critical analysis and different mechanisms to address the issues in their communities.
- An exposure and live in experience with the communities of women affected by Migration, Trafficking, in war conflicts, Prostitution, /HIV /AIDS, poverty, dowry system, casteism, etc. are provided to the students.
- Feminist perspectives from theological reflection and contextual Bible studies are enabled among students.
- Strong network with other like-minded women's groups who are working on the issue and strengthen the movement developed and a common strategy at the Regional level developed, deriving the insights from their countries to combat violence against women.

Capacity Building Training (CBT)

The WSCF has distinct recognition of being a pioneer body engaged in creative mobilization of the energy and interest of the youth, particularly, the student community. The learning and experiences garnered from the close association with the students enables WSCF to prioritize the felt needs of students. Substantive issues that are relevant to regional and national context are always discussed as such to assess the existing capacity and current approaches, based on which prioritization of capacity building needs is recommended. Building the capacity of the students indicate critical growth and change in ability leading to efficient functioning of the member SCMs, which ultimately shall equip and capacitate the Church in God's Mission.

Major Outcome

- The CBT has promoted student leaders / national coordinators with enhanced capacity to emerge as capable leaders both in secular and ecumenical spheres;
- It has refined the communication and soft skills among potential front line student leaders/ national coordinators that reflect civil society values and are vocal to socio-spiritual issues to strengthen movement
- Has increased better understanding of organizational development, strategies, systems and structures.
- improved the overall volunteer management and better understanding of accountability and transparency among member SCMs
- upgraded capacity in the areas of strategic planning, fund raising, effective and efficient implementation of national and regional level programs.
- developed latest communication strategies among the student leaders and national coordinators to address and advocate issues relevant to the student community
- It has fostered effectual networking among member SCMs and established strong solidarity among students as a global community encouraging mutual growth and the witnessing of Christ.

School for Ecumenical Leadership Formation (SELF) Programme

The first School for Ecumenical Leadership Formation (SELF) Programme was jointly developed by WSCF-AP region and Christian Conference of Asia Youth desk in 2001. The SELF is a response to what was seen as a gap in the development of ecumenical leadership formation. It hopes to re-examine the causes of weakening and re-develop the scope of ecumenical leadership. As bi-annual leadership development project, the SELF targets frontline leaders of the SCM such as staff and officers. SELF is an effective venue to train young ecumenist working closely with young people in the different parts of Asia and the Pacific.

Major Outcome

- SELF has enabled the students and youth to sharpen their awareness and analysis of the social, political and economic setting of the world in the context of Asian Pacific societies and challenge to the churches through sharing of experiences, exposure, studies and reflections
- Students are able to articulate the biblical and theological perspectives on the global burning issues such as globalization, militarization/war on terror, justice, peace, ecology, feminism, etc.
- Students have a better understanding on ecumenism/ ecumenical movement in the national, regional and global levels, identifying convergence, challenges and possibilities.
- Students have developed alternative approach to communicate and advocate ecumenical witness among students and youth in the concrete life of the peoples.

- Strengthened each other in their ecumenical journey and aspiration.

Asia Pacific Students and Youth Gathering

The Asia Pacific Students and Youth Gathering (ASYG) is the biggest regional ecumenical youth gathering in the region. It gathers more than a hundred youth and students coming from different mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in Asia Pacific. It provides a regional platform for common reflection and understanding on social concerns and issues that greatly affects the lives of the youth and students.

The ASYG was organized by the Easy Net (Ecumenical Asia Pacific Students and Youth Network). EASY Net is a voluntary network of youth and student movements in Asia and the Pacific. It seeks to promote and live out the spirit of ecumenism at the grassroots level through a deeper understanding of the realities as well as a common desire to confront the challenges facing the youth and students. Initially the network was founded with 6 organizations namely **Christian Conference of Asia, World Student Christian Federation Asia-Pacific, International Movement of Catholic Students, International Young Christian Students, Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCA and World Young Women's Christian Association** and in 2012 another organizations called **International Young Christian Workers – Asia Pacific (IYCW – ASPAC)** joined the network. It was formally established in January 2001 with the vision of building grassroots ecumenism.

Major Outcome

- ASYG created a platform for 170 Youth, Church leaders and students from Asia Pacific to come together to celebrate, dialogue in diversity and solidarity
- It has strengthened and revitalized Asian youth ecumenical networking and promote prophetic ministry of justice, Peace to affirm life in abundance.
- It has enhanced the National Ecumenical teams participation in cultivating culture of peace and justice at the grassroots level.
- Encouraged them to organize activities at local level to promote building up grassroots ecumenism.
- It has enhanced the ecumenical network and relationship among EASYNET member organizations and leaders.
- The ASYG has enabled and encouraged to bring voices of the Asian youth and students to the WCC 10th assembly to re-affirm with other youth of the world

International Christian Students' Peace Symposium on the theme: Peace-making, an Imperative of Christian Faith: A call for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation

The International Christian Student's Peace Symposium was an initiative to understand the issue of Korean peninsula and develop a culture of Peace and reconciliation through developing theological perspectives for the students and youth, organized by the WSCF-Asia Pacific region, KSCF (Korean Student Christian Federation), Korean YMCA, Korean Christian Faculty Association (KCFA). The Peace symposium brought Christian students and youth from different parts of Asia. The group also visited the unification observatory during the exposure to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Armistice Agreement of the creation of DMZ in Korean Peninsula. They also held a peace concert to promote peace through peace song, dance and music. The Peace Symposium was also to amplify the message of peace and justice through the theme of the World Council of Churches (WCC) 10th Assembly, "God of Life: Lead us to Justice and peace"

Conclusion

I would like to sum up the WSCF AP region's report by the following observations:

The WSCF is a unique platform which provides the young people to critically look at their social context with a lens of justice and peace. The Federation transforms their thinking pattern and make them an activist for a social change, no matter which stream they choose in their future professional career. The Federation help them to critically examine the role of churches and question the leadership of the churches on many of their actions, if it is not in line with a just cause. Such a platform, which has been providing ecumenical leadership in our students and youths for over a century and challenging the unjust system in the society and the church, is in a critical situation. Each one of us will agree, particularly the senior friends, present here, that what role has WSCF played in their formative lives and what they are today! Therefore, it's time for a "payback" to the Federation, which has given all of us so much! The AP Region looks forward to your prayers and solidarity in carrying out our work at the region. Despite of all the financial challenges some of our long standing partners and national SCMs and senior friends are continuing to journey with us in our difficult times. Because they understand the importance of investing in the youth during their formative years. On behalf of WSCF particularly from AP region, I would like to thank for their continuous support.

Submitted by:

Sunita Suna

Regional Secretary – WSCF AP

Appendix 6: Regional Report from Europe

WSCF EUROPE REPORT
to the 35th General Assembly of WSCF
February 27 to March 5, 2015
Bogotá, Colombia

Dear friends, I am very pleased and honoured to be with you all today at this 35th General Assembly in Bogotá and to present the WSCF Europe region report since the last GA in Montreal in 2008.

It is very symbolic that exactly 120 years ago, the WSCF was created and I would like to congratulate, on our 120th anniversary, each of you in this plenary and all our students, member movements, friends, partners all over the world who share our joy today.

The last six years have been truly wonderful years of excitement, opportunities and achievements. We went through busy and challenged times as well. But together with other regions we continued to bring together young Christians of different churches, traditions and cultures, to witness together Christian faith and to strive for peace and social justice in and among our countries.

We have experienced several changes in the region since the last GA. There were three Regional Secretaries and one Interim Regional Secretary before I joined the Federation in October 2014. I sincerely would like to thank all of them – Jooa Vuorinen (2007 – 2010), David Masters (2010- 2011), Katarina Babicova (2011 – 2012) and Hans Hommens (2012 - 2014) for their inspiring and dedicated work for WSCF. This report is prepared based on the presentations, reports and publications produced by my colleagues during this period.

In 2011 the regional office moved from Budapest to Berlin and I would also extend my gratitude to our movement in Germany, Evangelische Studentinnen Gemeinde in Deutschland, for helping with the move and for their continued support during all these years. Before Budapest, the office was in Oslo and Amsterdam, moving along with the Regional Secretary.

The European Regional Committee changed as well at the bi-annual European Regional Assembly – in Romania in 2009, Denmark in 2011 and Austria in October 2013. At these three meetings the term of many committee members came to an end and new people were elected. Ex-ERC members become Senior Friends and they continue to support the Federation in various capacities up to today.

The roles of the Committee members have remained the same during these years. A Fundraiser Coordinator's role was introduced in 2013. Currently, our Regional Committee consists of Chairperson, Treasurer, Links, Events, Fundraising and Campaign coordinators.

We unite 23 movements and contact groups in 22 countries.

15 affiliated movements

1. Austria
2. France
3. Czech Republic
4. Finland SKY
5. Finland OSA
6. Norway
7. Sweden
8. Denmark
9. Germany
10. Netherlands
11. UK
12. Lithuania
13. Italy
14. Slovakia
15. Romania

5 Associated movements:

1. Belarus
2. Bulgaria
3. Georgia
4. Ireland
5. Poland

3 contact movements:

1. Ukraine
2. Spain
3. Armenia

Sub-regions

WSCF Europe has three sub-regions which organise their own programmes as well: the Central European Sub-region (CESR), the Nordic Cooperation Council (NCC), and the West European Sub-region (WESR).

The SCMs of Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia are cooperating to provide regional events and publications in our Central European Sub-region. By discovering the common roots in their history but also the enriching differences, they grow in the idea of Central Europe as a distinct identity.

In the Nordic Cooperation Council the SCMs of Denmark, Lithuania, Finland, Norway, and Sweden work together to host summer camps and other activities bringing students from that region together. They work closely to invite all denominations together for open dialogue and community building.

The Western European Sub-region is still only in a developing stage. We hope that Germany, the United Kingdom and other SCMs in that region will be able to work together on exchanges, trainings and other activities.

Thematic Programmes

The thematic programmes in the Region adhere to the mission and vision of the Federation, living faith together for peace and justice. We strive towards unity in diversity across the boundaries of denomination, culture, nation, and gender, seeking to provide a forum of Christian witness and ecumenical dialogue for students. To address these objectives, we have four working programmes focusing on issues of theology, solidarity, gender, and culture and higher education.

Theology

Coming from many churches and denominations, we share our diverse understandings of faith, learning from each other's traditions, exploring different forms of worship and confronting contemporary and social issues from a theological perspective. We see these differences not as divisive, but as uniting – celebrating diversity is our driving force.

Among the issues we cover during the theology conferences are how theology and religion have been closely tied with government and political policy in Europe and the wider world.

Solidarity

Our Solidarity program creates a space for students to engage with and critically analyse their social, political and economic environment from a Christian perspective.

In 2008 – 2010 we ran a three years campaign against domestic violence, *Stop Being Silent!*

Gender

Issues of gender and gender equality touch us at the very core of our existence as gendered beings. Our daily lives, identities and social structures, with their possibilities and limits, are all shaped by our conception of gender. Through critical study and intercultural exchange, we explore how gender and faith interact.

Culture and Higher Education

The changing face of higher education is of particular importance to us. With the increased commercialisation of universities and time pressures on students, it is essential to revive the presence and responsibility of Christian witness in the academic world. Learning about cultures and cultural expression is central to our activities: we provide a space for sharing, respecting, and celebrating our diverse backgrounds in a multicultural Europe.

Organised for and by students and focusing on current issues from our interest groups, our regular thematic conferences gather together students from across Europe. In 2008-2014 we organised over 20 events in these thematic areas.

Regional Statutory Activities provide the spaces for us to conduct our in-depth strategic planning process for WSCF Europe. These events examine every aspect of our work, with the aim of making ourselves and our member movements better able to engage with the needs of young Christians from all denominations in Europe, and to give our work a wider reach and a bigger impact. There are two types of Regional Statutory Activities - one is staff and officers meetings, the other European Regional Committee meetings.

Annual Staff and Officers Meetings are an important platform for the staff of our member movements not only to study and be trained in certain topics the Federation faces, but also to meet each other and the staff of the Region, and share their reports, future plans, experiences, joys, struggles and sorrows, enabling them to cooperate better and network, bringing the region closer together. This is a space to meet our Senior Friends as well.

Since 2010 we have met in Sweden, UK, Germany, Austria, Macedonia, Spain.

Lingua Franca

The Lingua Franca Programme belongs to our thematic work. It was set up in 1991 by WSCF Europe and EYCE (Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe) with the aim to widen participation and build a new generation of ecumenical leadership. Lingua Franca training seminars offer opportunities for further skill development related to various aspects of youth empowerment. They focus mostly on students and young people from Central and Eastern Europe and the language is taught by students and young people from Western and Northern Europe, USA and Australia. Courses usually last two to three weeks and occur mostly during the summer time.

The primary aims of the programme are to provide a space for language learning, cultural exchange, ecumenical encounter and ecumenical leadership training. These summer camps encourage students to participate in planning the programme. The structure of the course is decided in consultation between teacher and learners at the beginning of the course and depends on the interests of those involved and the possibilities that a particular context provides.

During the camps, young Christians also develop leadership skills through project management, human resources management, time planning, all necessary steps in organising a course, and further more, they become aware of their common faith and belief of the Christian Churches involved in the ecumenical movement. Therefore, Lingua Franca breaks not only the linguistic and cultural barriers among young people in Europe, but also our prejudices regarding other's culture, faith and traditions.

We are receiving positive feedbacks regarding the Lingua Franca projects from the participants and from our partners. As young people especially in Eastern countries express the need of leadership training and support, we are determined to continue our program, despite big financial struggles.

In 2008-2014 we organised 7 Lingua Franca summer camps in Romania, Bulgaria, Belarus, Ukraine, Serbia and Slovakia.

Publications

Our ecumenical journal Mozaik is published following up the thematic conferences. We have a new Editor-in-Chief for Mozaik in 2012 and 2014.

In 2008 and 2011 we published a new WSCF-E Songbook for our own use.

Funding

The Region fundraises for the programme events and the administrative costs of the regional office. WSCF-E receives support from European Youth Foundation, Youth Programme of European Commission, GBGM. We had strong support from churches till 2010, with over one fifth (21%) of our funding coming from church agencies. Since 2011 funds from churches became less, around 15% of our budget in 2011, and less than 5% in 2012.

Networks

We are the members of the Religions for Peace European Inter-faith Youth Network. The Network brings together faith based youth organisations. We enjoy being part of this network with new and old partners, such as the European Youth Council of Europe, the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations and the European Union of Jewish Students.

I believe the next years will see a strengthening of the WSCF presence at all levels, with a special focus on achieving more synergy between local movements and regional and global structures. This synergy is particularly important through the current turbulent period of crisis and social changes. We need to share, reconcile and unite to grow and succeed in our vision.

Thank you very much for your attention. I welcome your questions and comments as ideas and suggestions on our way forward.

Thank you.

Natia Tsintsadze

Regional Secretary

World Student Christian Federation in Europe.

Appendix 7: Regional Report from Latin America/Caribbean

WSCF LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN REPORT

to the 35th General Assembly of WSCF

February 27 to March 5, 2015

Bogotá, Colombia

WSCF Presentation

WSCF Latin America and the Caribbean has its Regional Office in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Our region is composed of the following movements: MEC¹⁴ for Equity (Mexico), CEPAJ (Ecuador), MEC Bolivia, MEC Chile (Santiago and Concepción) MEC Uruguay, MEC Argentina, MEC Brazil, MEC of Cuba, ACEH-MEC Haiti, MEC Colombia (Barranquilla and Bogotá). MEC Associate MEC Peru Movement of Contact: MEC El Salvador.

Challenges presented in the Region

- We are in the region with more bio diversity of the world; with great ability to produce food, raw materials, natural resources, rivers, seas, water reserves, forests and oil. A rich region, but it is still the most unequal region in the world.
- Violence, civil war, militarism in response to increased conflict over land tenure and determination of people. Adding to this the nature exploitation.
- Environmental conflicts because of the intensification of the multinational private sector in the search for natural resources and extractive-export policies of states: Mining and Deforestation.
- Commercialization of education.
- Unequal relationship between the youth population.

Internal challenges in the LAC WSCF and WSCF were solved but this work took time and investment in the region.

- Economic and administrative situation. Lack of funds, loss of partners.
- Absence of audits for 4 years and problems of accountability.
- Programmatic: Deficit of a program and regional projects.
- Debt (with institutions and individuals).
- Disconnection without communication with local movements.
- Currently still we grapple with the lack of human resources in our regional office, so the work of the Secretary covers large areas of tasks, including the administration, office management, communications, etc.

¹⁴ In English – SCM. MEC is used for SCM throughout this LAC Report.

The vision and sense of Mission that has guided us in our work in the region

The life in Latin America and the Caribbean over the last four years had particular aspects that were necessary to differentiate. Therefore, we could understand two different movements in the Region.

The first, from 2011 to 2012, involved recovery and restoration, and the second, from 2013 to the present time, focused on construction and development. While we do not separate the report in two, vision and mission is necessary to consider. The turning point was the 2013 Regional Assembly, where we added and improved the plan which had already been started under the budget in the analysis of the external and internal context of the WSCF LAC.

We needed to ask ourselves as a region, how could we get out of this situation?

For that, based on the WSCF in LAC, we needed to respond to the context, with emphasis on certain points that we need to improve. These have been part of our guide during this time:

- Students and women, focusing on the public agenda.
- Development of ecumenical youth and student leadership as recovery strategy of regional self-esteem, and to recover contact and Movement strengthening.
- Focusing on youth.
- Building networks at regional and global level.

The guidance of the Regional Assembly in Lima 2013 was essential to improve our work in Mission and Vision considering our own reality: challenges, priorities and capabilities.

The Regional Assembly reaffirmed the framework and interpretation of the vision: It was a turning point in the last four years. Working on a plan with 4 crucial points, the MECs defined the outline for a more comprehensive Strategic Plan that would address the needs that we spoke about in **context**: we should develop the capacity to face the **challenges**, and focus on **priorities**.

This is a result of a plan for the coming years that includes 4 thematic areas of vital importance. Three of them are related to those aspects that MEC and the region need to develop as a transformation subject in our local context, our communities, but also in the regional and global sector: **Eco Justice, Identifying Diversity and Coexistence, Peace and Justice, Caring in Emergencies and Humanitarian Crisis**, designed to respond as processing agents in the context of the 21st century in Latin America and the Caribbean areas. Despite integration processes, we are still facing neo-colonial economic models which continue to generate inequalities and exclusion. We are working mainly with the poorest where young people and students are part of our target population. We recognize also that being young is not an isolated category. Young people are women, the poor, indigenous, African populations, peasants. We live in different contexts.

In order to develop processes of incidence and/or community service, it is necessary to face the challenge of working on **strengthening the movements. This is the 4th: Our Strategic Plan area**. In order to build the capacity of the movements and their leaders; it proposes more communication between internally organized labor; visibility and call for the MECs; and finally, the development of biblical and theological analysis. These are the focal points for the revitalization and greater work of MECs.

- **What were the main themes worked?**

Some approaches to the theme or emphasis:

In all developed themes, which include regional and local activities, we have tried to intersect the values and perspectives of our mission and vision to explore and develop capabilities, themes, leadership and planning.

The major developed elements:

Eco Justice: The unjust relationship between the economy and ecology leads to greater exclusion and inequality affecting entire populations, not only from the point of view on how the economic, military and political power impacts on the most vulnerable societies but also as consequences of the exploitation of the common goods of nature. Predation and exploitation of nature has generated many problems such as natural, humanitarian and climatic changes. Disasters always affect the most vulnerable populations. Eco Justice has been implemented in several of the three levels of the Federation, and Latin America has been used as a space for exchange and dialogue between local regions. From here we want to extend globally to expose the problem, and not from a romantic view, but from a broad political vision and advocacy.

Ecumenical leadership development: This has been a principle of our Federation in the region. It has been a component of each local workspace and in the areas of global and regional interaction.

Also we commented on the issue of **humanitarian crises and emergencies:** The fundamental question is how the MECs respond to what is happening in our region with students, youth, women and children who are victims of violence, inequalities, forced disappearances, persecution, and criminalization of social protests. Where do we stand to meet and accompany students who struggle against the commodification of life and poverty?

We want to name the main programs and / or activities:

1. **NAR Regional Meeting and LAC Bi "Students at a meeting for Justice and Solidarity" 2012;** Interacts directly with the three levels of the Federation.

2. **Regional Program "Youth and Environment Justice" 2012-2014**

We would like to emphasize this program, as it has been with the coordinator of the two movements mentioned at the beginning (the recovery and growth). The program initially helped implement part of the view held in the period, going from less to more. The strategy was to make a regional program which is expressed locally as a first step to recovery of communication and self-esteem of MECs and Region. Therefore the program includes the main inputs needed to achieve the objectives of the two movements we mentioned at the beginning: for nearly three years it has worked to develop:

Interaction and networks: Create workspaces on the issue, expressed locally but linked regionally with other movements and the Global Federation.

Ecumenical Leadership Development: Training of leaders who could network with other leaders, who were motivated and driven by the program, to communicate within the region and to support processes within the program. In addition, it will strengthen advocacy capacities.

Thematic Development: The relationship between economy, ecology and ecumenism and how young people were related to this, to transform from local and regional. Capacity building of local planning for achieving the objectives.

This also includes non-student groups, grass-root groups and neighborhood or marginalized communities to interact, plan and act together. These groups are related to the MECs.

The program includes:

- A photographic sample on Water and Itinerant Community.
- Between 3-5 local workshops in each of the participants of MECs for 2½ years: Eco-themed Justice, Climate Change, Economic Justice and Water.
- Guidelines for conducting advocacy activities locally.
- Two regional meetings that promote participation in shared agendas with students and youth networks.
- A specific program website
- The Popular Reading and the Bible and theological analysis from the perspective of Eco Justice.
- The final systematization and planning for monitoring and improving the work of the region on the issue of Eco Justice.
- The publication of the book "Youth and students acting by Eco justice" that meets guidelines, popular readings of the Bible, Introduction to Theology Eco, guides the development of that workshops, and stories of life along the MECs draft including a photo sample of water.

The overall result of this project was to launch the movement: to develop and promote new leaders among the MECs and strengthen communication, develop the skills and understanding about the Eco Justice and improve planning and monitoring.

Through monitoring, we can see that 2113 students and young people that have participated in local activities, and / or Regional Programs.

3. Regional Training Tools for Public Advocacy. This meeting was highlighted as a space of continuity and depth to the programs developed since 2012. This specifically developed shaft advocacy as a tool for local use.

4. Regional Meeting "Retracting networks for Eco Justice". This was a promotional awareness space, presenting the work of Movements and development of training in networking. In addition to the active participation of ecumenical activities at COP20, in Lima, Peru, student actors actively participated in the creation and development of the Ecumenical Coalition on Climate Change.

The main thematic local MECs worked and provided input to develop a comprehensive strategic plan regionally and the interpretation for needs of improvement:

- Citizen Participation based on youth.

- Intergenerational dialogue.
- Water and Environmental Justice.
- Dialogue and work for a fair coexistence: Minority rights.
- Emergency Care.
- Participation and local implementation of the "Youth and Environmental Justice".
- Public advocacy against the economic blockade against Cuba.

- **Contribution of WSCF Diakonia, Advocacy and Biblical-Theological Reflection.**

It was briefly mentioned what we have done in two fundamental points that the Assembly wants to work on. Since the description of our work can be clearly seen in these expressions.

Solidarity and advocacy:

- Solidarity with Cuba, who continues to deal with the economic blockade against the Caribbean nation. In addition to demanding the release of the 5 Cubans unjustly detained in US prisons since 1998, mainly through regional bi Program.
- Advocacy on climate change and development paradigm. This was part of our programs and activities in regional and international networks: The World Council of Churches, Ecumenical Coalition conferences of the parties on climate change and Rio +20: Durban (COP17) 2011, Rio +20, 2012, Lima (COP20) 2014. The network was with Latin American ecumenical organizations.
- Statement of Solidarity with the different situations of injustice and humanitarian crises in Palestine, Syria, Mexico, in the re-opening of US-Cuba relations (with the North America Region)
- Campaign and actions of solidarity with the MEC of Mexico and the MECs in the Region "Everyone Ayotzinapa".

Biblical Theological Analysis:

- Workshops for popular reading of the Bible
- Development of knowledge in the area of eco theology and production of teaching materials through the MECs
- Integration of biblical theological fundamentals as support for the planning and implementation, action of activities and/or programs.

Capacity Building and Organizational Development

As for capacity building, I would stress that this has been a transversal axis of all activities as part of a system that goes beyond the sole activity. Especially since it emphasizes organizational development and construction of movements due to some key points in programs and activities in order to make the process in training and leadership development clear. Therefore, in every regional work area, WSCF has a role in planning and monitoring to develop a specific point to monitor the local labor and observe how the process of institutional development interacts with local activities, after each program or activity.

Results concerning the construction work and organizational development. The MECs in relation to the vision that has guided us for the past 4 years

After three years of working with youth organizations and students in Brazil, we have reached the point of establishing a national coordination of MEC in Brazil. In December 2014, WSCF met with MEC leaders in Brazil to establish coordination with MEC Brazil, based on three fundamental areas: theology students, Campus Ministry and Youth Study of Churches. In this commitment, development, MEC Brazil is a reality and road to their assembly.

Other processes initiated also made the improvement in communication, construction and development of Movements evident. These processes now work with MEC Chile turning to settle at national level, with a new movement based in Santiago de Chile.

In Peru, there is renewed communication in leadership and they have worked in regional and local programs, planning, after many years, an Assembly of MEC Peru.

In Argentina, after two years of ineffective communication, we worked on the possibility of a model of coordination to establish benchmarks and movements, together with people of Churches and engaging more young people to be part of the Movement. We also walked into an Assembly of Argentina MEC allowing to explore the integration of other student movements, in order to have a national movement. The strategy as in Brazil, it is noted that the MEC may not be an isolated space of existing processes, but another actor in the ecumenical life of the country.

With the MEC of Bolivia, we have not only recovered communication but has worked hard at the local level in the fundamental issues that the region had proposed, also reaching to work with existing networks for the production of knowledge on the subject of Water and the development of Christian activists who work for the rights of Mother Earth.

Conclusions:

Where we were in 2011:

In 2011, we had no contact with the MEC in Bolivia. Brazil MEC (MEET), had disappeared. Contact with the MEC for Equity in Mexico was very weak. Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, were weakened in its organization and convocation. For the MEC Peru, there was only one contact.

Many of the movements were suffering with problems of communication with the Secretariat, encountering difficulties performing activities, convening and visibility.

In 2011, in a very unfavorable climate for the institutionalization of WSCF ALC context, we met with many structural, financial problems, accountability and communication. Most of these problems have been solved; others have been analyzed by the region, and included as a basis for developing a plan that allows us to improve a little more every day.

Cuba and Ecuador Movements had different situations and are further strengthened and had a firmer structure and an internal organization that allows one to keep running continuously.

The lack of ecumenical assistance program added complexity to the relationship and the lives of MECs. We feel this lack of support for our movements in Latin America.

Where are we today?

We live a situation that we and our Regional Bureau and ExCo members say is better. Not as the panacea of the World Student Christian Movement, but based on our recent aesthetic, anthropological and contextual and historical records: as a humble recovery region trying to work from their possibilities while we are constrained in our dreams.

Both MECs, shown in the Table regionally worked together to improve. It has been a great deal in our last Assembly in 2013. The MEC has life and so we have the WSCF. Therefore we did not think it was necessary for the regional Secretariat as a separate space, but also as a server for MECs, standing at the time of the strategic planning, analysis of challenges under priorities and capacities, in order to have shared results.

Building processes and institution building takes time. This time, it is necessary to build trust, to generate strong supports that help us work to bi-directionally committed to our mission and vision.

Appendix 8: Regional Report from Middle East

WSCF MIDDLE EAST REPORT

to the 35th General Assembly of WSCF

February 27 to March 5, 2015

Bogotá, Colombia

WSCF ME... for the life of the Church and the blooming of the society

Elsy Wakil

February 2015 - GA

As for the Church in my society, it now fears in general the fall of tyranny in as much as its fears the post revolution. And in the midst of all these scarifies and martyrs, we tried, in the World Student Christian Federation to remain close to the revolution, with the change that our countries always dreamed of, to keep up with our practice in this crazy violent world. We tried to translate in our populations upraising the meaning of being “the salt of the Earth”, a message of Justice and peace.

Our Church is a witness of the Christ in our society. However, the Arab populations stand exhausted between the Israeli occupation with all its implications and the post revolution violent dynamics. How difficult it is for an Arab Christian to witness today in an era of war and violence! How difficult it is for Arab women to raise their cause in a context where staying alive is the only crucial cause!

The Arab Christians today live an extreme fear about the future but taken also it is a spiritual challenge ... Can we remain really as believers in Jesus Christ in time of violence and war. And maybe, if we remain close to our Lord in this difficult time, Christians can reborn from “high above” as Paul says and transform this tragedy to a renewed era of love between Christians and Muslims. Can women or some women today go beyond the ongoing drama and jump spiritually for their marginalization to propose this major change in Church and society? Women with some men, some hierarchs, some Muslims, and proposed a new social project for the whole society? This is a real challenge today and opportunity for the youth, WSCF and the Arab church not to be afraid from pioneering (with modesty) this historical and spiritual Change...

The Church of the Arabs in the Middle East is still under the pressures between the Israelis planning for a Jewish state and the growing Islamic state. The WSCF questions remain: How to be a Christian in the Arab world today? How to witness under terror? Who are our partners in society? How to partnership towards a new society where Christians values and noble Islamic values can be reflected peacefully in a just, democratic, society when women and men can equally build their social and religious blooming.

Amongst the grim picture, we notice a point, a brink of light that is very important for it teaches us a lot. We spread among each other a tidings: In spite of the destruction, under the bombs and the notorious war, in Syria's Damascus, a WSCF Ecumenical Youth committee was born. It witnesses Christ among the combatants. The same goes for the bleeding Sudan: the youths are preparing an Ecumenical conference and are willing to launch an Ecumenical committee for the youths. Social media networks are filled with thousands of hits from participants who joined the activities of the Federation. This is the work of God, in a time we feel useless and hopeless every time we arrange an activity. However, every day we learn something new and perhaps, we spiritually grow. We raise each Ecumenical initiative, along with its dereliction to the God, asking him for love. However, in nowadays, Christian youth under all the pressures, still believe that being part of the WSCF is a big challenge ... and continue to pray and act together.

We can say, humbly, that the World Student Christian Federation in the Middle East has succeeded in building many regional programs as Ecumenical Leadership, Christian-Muslim Dialogue with topics regarding "Ecumenism in witness of the Arab Church (2008). In 2009, Church and Dialogue... For an Alter Globalization was accomplished in Alexandria, Egypt. In 2010, Church ... and challenges of Secularism in the Arab World" was in Lebanon. In 2011, "Church & Revolutions of Arab people: What kind of Citizenship" was in Egypt. In 2012 "Youth and Freedom ... In Church and Society" was in Lebanon. In 2013 "Towards Solidarity for the future of the Arabs (Christian youth Witness Today)" was in Lebanon. In 2014, "The Church and the rule of Islamic Currents in the Arab World" (Youth struggle between Christian belonging and the citizenship building) was in Egypt.

Special focus is placed on countries that have special needs like Iraq, Sudan, Palestine and recently Syria or on subjects of common interest and great importance. Specific training conferences are held for youth of these countries to empower them, and encourage and build their capacity to establish Students' Christian Movements that will come to expand the WSCF-ME family.

WSCF leadership training seminars are a means that give Youth the possibility to explore ways of empowering themselves and to contribute to peace building through Ecumenism.

Women program tackling themes like:

- In 2008 "Women's Rights: Reality and Perspectives of Church and Society"
- In 2009 "Ecumenism and Women's Witnesses...in Church and Society"
- In 2010 "Readings of Violations of Women's Right in The Arab World ... Role of the Church".
- In 2011 "Church... Challenges of Patriarchal Society"
- In 2012 "Woman ... between the East and the West"
- In 2013 "Is Arab spring emancipating women in Church and Society?"
- In 2014 "Facing the Cultural Marginalization of Women in the Church and the Society".

We hope that this will ease the process of rebirth in the era so called "youth revolutions" in the Arab World. And may I confess to you that when I started in my responsibility as regional secretary I felt also really afraid in a time where Ecumenism was in crisis in the Arab world, while I doubted my acceptance in the church circles being a woman but I want to share with you my learning that by the grace of God women in conservative context must firstly struggle with themselves to go beyond their own fear just to witness concretely and simply, like others, with others, our love to Jesus Christ. The youths wanted the World Student Christian Federation to be a smooth embodiment of this change in both the Church and society.

Violence and wars in the Middle East region continue ... which means extremism, irrationality and horrors alienating youth in their deep existence, dreams, visions and hard temptations for the faith. The Church of the Arabs is threatened permanently at least in the physical existence of the believers... But those who remain by the grace of Lord, also

mature in their faith, and try to experiment Christian love in the midst of horrors and pain, in their daily life in Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Our mission today in the midst of scenes of oppression and death, try to proclaim the Resurrection of Jesus.. Pray together, act together and spread the words of the Gospel in a “theology of hope”...

Finally I received a letter from a young active lady in WSCF and I'll share it with you.

Dear Elsy... Hi

May our Lord protect you in your travel to participate in the WSCF General assembly in Bogota ... you asked us if we want to add any input so I wrote few words for the participants. May our Lord bless you all.

My name is Nour ... Am a simple young woman, who gets up every morning drink coffee, hug my parents and go to my university. Here, the occupation militaries obliged us to demolish our home but our people and our Land hosted us and we remained... and we pray.

My two brothers are in jail and every day I go to the old church to pray for them... and we remained ... and we pray.

my city we approach the old churches and the old Mosques? As one ... And it's our duty to protect them for the coming generations as a symbol of profound unity... For freedom, peace and prayers. That's what unifies us.

Yes, our people are very oppressed and they want to throw us out of our beloved land. But also we live in the deep happiness of being blessed by the spiritual mystery of the old city and its people and the support of all the free and sincere people all over the world. And also here we wait the opportunity to extend our love to our enemies.

Please receive my invitation to hold your next assembly here in this city. Our city is the real Ecumenical city ... waiting for you from long time. Our people want you ... need you..don't forget the ecumenical city and its people.. They want us to be thrown in the desert of history.

I send you all my warm greetings ... me Nour a simple young woman who gets up in the mornings drink coffee hug my parents and go to the university. I am waiting for all of you with my people... I guess you know my address, I am Nour.

My city

Your city

Our city is Al Quds/ Jerusalem

I love you all

Nour

Appendix 9: Regional Report from North America

WSCF NORTH AMERICA REPORT

to the 35th General Assembly of WSCF

February 27 to March 5, 2015

Bogotá, Colombia

General Presentation

Dear SCMerS, Senior Friends and Partners,

It is my pleasure to present to you the Report from the WSCF-NA Region. I have been in this position for the last seven years and it has been a very exciting as well as challenging times. We all come to the GA with a lot of trepidation about the present and future of the WSCF. Many of us are aware that we are living a significant crisis. As SCMerS, however, we must identify these moments in a prophetic way. We are clouds of witnesses who, sitting at the feet of the cross, move forward into the path of resurrection. Resurrection is today, at this time, in the struggle for liberation and justice.

When I started as North America Regional Secretary in January 2008, planning for the 2008 General Assembly in Montreal was underway and the WSCF-NA has just re-opened in New York City after a brief period in Toronto. At that time, there were no regional activities, SCM in the USA or funding for programming and core budget and a lack of recent historic memory on SCM/WSCF in the US. WSCF-NA started out with \$110 in the bank, a \$2,500 grant from the US Trustees for travel and networking and a lot of vision from the student leadership and Senior Friends who supported the rebirth of the region and the SCM in the USA. SCM Canada, the US Trustees, staff of CESCO, the then US affiliated movement prior to SCM-USA, and the students who attended WSCF inter-regional events had carried the WSCF flag for the previous 20 years, since the last WSCF-NA office had been in place. Seven years into this process, I am delighted to say that WSCF-NA has had a significant growth, with yearly programs taking place, NA students attending regularly inter-regional events and other national, regional and global programs sponsored by partner organizations, vaster visibility in the region, renewed and new programmatic and funding partnerships, a nascent SCM-USA with activities, a few chapters and students linked through the movement and some funding reserves that have allowed the region to support more capacity building in the region and the IRO and other regions with solidarity contributions at different levels. Since 2008, the WSCF has been engaged in reviving the North America Region in order to provide opportunities to students in the US and Canada to engage in a global progressive, social justice and grassroots ecumenical network. The WSCF-NA launched its new phase of existence at an event held in San Francisco on January 29-February 1, 2009. The conference, whose theme was "Raising New Prophets, Arising of a Movement" engaged approximately eighty students in analyzing activism from a faith perspective and in envisioning as a group the building of a prophetic movement in North America committed to progressive social change, building peace among nations, fostering economic opportunities for everybody and promoting racial, environmental and gender justice. At that event, US students formed a steering committee that paved the way to the planning of a launch assembly for the SCM-USA, which despite challenges and setbacks due to the current ecumenical and university settings in North America, will be affiliated at this General Assembly. The other affiliated movement in the region, the SCM of Canada, continues its work with social justice oriented students in spite of the challenges that have affected it in the last few years. The Regional Associated Movements, the

Lutheran Student Movement and the United Methodist Student Movement, have also seen a time of flux and change and are in the process of reconfiguring their ministry as well as their relationship with the WSCF, which has been growing for both in the last year or so. Thanks to capable student leadership, some of whom are here as delegates and ExCo members, all movements have engaged with renewed passion with our global student network and I see the future promising and bright. In these years, we have formed significant relationships with denominational student groups and collegiate ministry staff and campus ministers, including the Youth Council of the Primate World Relief Development fund of the Anglican Church in Canada, the United Church of Christ in the US, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Alliance of Baptists to name a few. A member of SCM-USA is representing the PCUSA here at GA. Following the conference in San Francisco, through a series of national conferences and events the WSCF-NA has gained a presence in both the US and Canada and continue to promote movement building, leadership training programs, regional and global events and advocacy work. These events include: a conference and re-launching assembly of the Student Christian Movement-USA on Overcoming Violence held at historic Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA in October 2010; a WSCF regional conference in Ottawa, Canada focused on ecological justice in June 2010; the first WSCF North American Regional Assembly on the theme of Peace-making held in Chicago in 2011; a joined program on eco-justice with the WSCF Latin American and Caribbean Region held in Cuba in April 2012; an inter-generational eco-justice symposium in New York in 2012, a joined program on Mining Justice with the WSCF Asia-Pacific Region held in November 2014, the SCM-USA Leadership Training Programs held in Washington DC in April 2013 and 2014 and an LGBTQ conference on the intersectionality of justice in San Francisco in December 2014.

In addition to WSCF global events described in the GS Report, the WSCF-NA has sponsored or has sent participants to the following events:

- Ecumenical Advocacy Days, Washington DC, (2008-2014)
- US Bread for the World National conference in Washington DC, (2011)
- Facing Race Conference in Baltimore (2012)
- The International Camps at the Agape Ecumenical Center in Praly, Italy, (2008-2014)
- A World Without Empire conference and Peace Festival in New York (2010)
- Peace For Life activities and Assemblies in Colombia, the Philippines and South Korea (2009-2013)
- The Ecumenical Conference on Mining Justice, Toronto Canada (2011)
- WCC's Poverty, Wealth and Ecology North American Forum and Hearings, Calgary, Canada (2011)
- New Fire, a coordination of Young Adult ecumenical efforts in North America (2008-2014)
- The Truth Commission on Conscience in War, New York (2010)
- The US Social Forum, Detroit (2010)

Highlights for 2015 include a Student Christian Movement (SCM)-USA Leadership Training Program to be held in New York on April 9-12, SCM Canada's Cahoots Social Justice Festival to be held in Ontario, Canada on July 9-12, an alternative spring break organized by the Lutheran Student Movement and the WSCF North America Regional Assembly (NARA) on Racism, "Coloniality" and Right Relations to be held in Ottawa, Canada on May 29-June 2nd.

Challenges

As mentioned above, beside the progress made since the re-launch of the WSCF-NA, the work in North America has not been an easy and has been fraught with challenges. Some are highlighted below:

- Staff and leadership stretched too thin. The ambitious plans the region set in place have placed a huge workload in the regional staff and the region's leadership. Students who are involved in the region are passionately engaged with the work of the WSCF but are overloaded with responsibilities and tasks
- Higher Education's pressure on students. Students are affected by rising costs of higher education and the difficulty to balance school, work and volunteer activities such as the WSCF. Students who are involved with SCM/WSCF are often burdened by loans that allow them to go to university if not independently wealthy. The rush to end their education in order to seek gainful employment needed to pay back loans puts huge stressor factors on students, whose time to be involved with the WSCF becomes limited.
- Difficulty of organizing on campus. SCM types have a difficult time to organize groups on campus. Many progressive young people and students do not want to engage with a Christian organization because of the association with conservative and oppressive values. Christians on campus often attend conservative fundamentalist campus groups. Those who frequent ecumenical campus ministries are not looking for a group to be active in, so the onus is on campus ministers to affiliate with SCM. Many social justice-oriented students have other issue-based groups they belong to on campus. It is also true that students in the 21st century organize themselves in a different way as they did in previous decades and SCM chapters might not be the most appropriate way to be engaged in ecumenical justice work on campus and in society. SCM is attractive, but students must plan according to their needs and understanding of what would work.
- Denominations in crisis. The WSCF-NA operated at a time when historical denominations are seeing their numbers drop, their funding diminish, their budgets being slashed, and an environment of fear and territorialism to prosper. Despite all of this, many denomination staff members remain deeply committed to the WSCF and have been looking favourably at the work of SCM/WSCF in the region.
- Denominations and ecumenical partners. Despite the fact that some denominations and ecumenical organizations are increasingly and actively seeking partnership with the WSCF and invite us into their processes or to attend their conferences and see more and more the WSCF as an important actor to mobilize students and young people, many of them are also trying to figure out how to live ecumenism in the 21st century and in a changing world.

This makes for a challenging but also creative time.

The Mission and Vision that guided the WSCF-NA

Christian students and young people in North America are increasingly seeking new ways of expressing their faith, connecting with the global community and combining their Christian witness to concrete acts of solidarity and promotion of positive social change. They thirst for constructive relationships, the building of peace among nations and economic opportunities for everybody. Our ailing environment cries out for restorative actions to preserve our planet and to revert the catastrophic trends that have caused global warming and climate

change. North American students need to be offered leadership-training opportunities to emerge as social justice activists, promote social change at home and reconnect with the global community.

Additionally, North American students, especially those who struggle to pay their skyrocketing tuition, must be offered a chance to become involved in a movement that speaks to their needs of human connectedness rather than a constant reminder of succeeding in their career and in their future lives. This is especially true for those who spend most of their free time out of school in jobs that do not fulfill their desires but allow them to pay their schooling. Reclaiming a Christian theology based on the mission of Jesus of Nazareth who challenged the Roman Empire, brought good news to the poor and the marginalized, and became the Christ of liberation is a driving force for young people who believe in connecting faith and social justice.

In an ever-changing reality where some of the positive aspects of secularization are often accompanied by the idolatry of the market and a lack of spiritual connections, new generations of students are hungry for participating in God's creation and to develop alternative ways of partnership, communities and services.

Since the re-launching of the WSCF-NA, the North America Regional Committee has placed emphasis on the following:

- Support national movements in capacity building, outreach, program planning and leadership trainings
- Foster an Intergenerational WSCF community by engaging students and Senior friends in relationship building, thinking and reflecting together and engaging Senior friends in capacity building and resource production
- Increase capacity building in the WSCF-NA office to help the region face the increase in capacity, programming and fundraising
- Develop and implement a communication plan and strategy to work effectively together
- Develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to improve accountability

The North America Region's vision has been guided all along by a concept of g-local engagement and inter-regional crosspollination and solidarity. The Inter-regional Strategic Plan has been on forefront of regional engagements and regional programs have reflected the connections between local issues and issues affecting other countries. Including students from other WSCF-NA regions, has also been a guiding principle of our work. Thanks to two generous grants, we were for instance able to bring 11 SCMerS from other regions to the Leadership Training Program in 2014. We aim to repeat this experience this year again. SCMerS are like biological systems. They are well rooted in their humus and at the same time they are inter-dependent, and part of the same *oikos*, the whole inhabited world. The WSCF functions as a microcosm of the *oikos*, one that thrives on the interconnectedness of the different parts of a socio-biological system. God and her creation are at the center of these links, as the guarantor of a life-giving planet.

Regional Themes and Foci

The thematic areas and issues on which the WSCF-NA has focused since General Assembly reflect those that arose out of the General Assembly in 2008: Overcoming Violence and Peace-Making, Economic and Ecological Justice, now Eco-justice, and Identity, Diversity and Dialogue. Some of these issues have branched out to fit people's struggles in North America. For instance, the link between racism, white privilege, and mass incarceration are related to violence and war mongering, economic and ecological justice. Activism of Canadian

and US students to stop the construction of a pipeline going from Canada to the bottom of the United States is connected to mining justice, which was the focus of a bilateral exchange the WSCFNA planned with the AP region and the SCMI in December 2014.

The work of Identity, Diversity and Dialogue in North America is led by a regional Human Sexuality Working group and takes place through the implementation of an LGBTQ program. In 2014, a conference on the intersectionality of justice for sexual minorities was planned to give an opportunity to students to reflect on how gender and sexuality are intrinsically related to race, economics, healthcare, incarceration and other issues. Eco-justice was also the major focus of a bilateral exchange program with the Latin America Region held in Cuba in 2012, where students from the two regions shared how movements engage in ecological and economic issues and planned a common advocacy agenda. The North America Regional Assemblies have also focused on issues pertaining to the global strategic plan. In 2011, at the first Regional Assembly planned in the region, we analyzed how economy, ecology and war are interconnected and how students can engage locally to counter such a strong culture of violence. A liturgical worship took place on the shore of Lake Michigan prior to our participating in the Occupy Chicago march as an exposure to activist work in the city. Participants from the Middle Eastern Region presented the challenges that student face in conflict-torn countries and how the WSCF engages students on war and violence. Currently, we are planning our second Regional Assembly, to be held in Ottawa Canada at the end of May this year. The theme of the event will be Racism, Coloniality and Right Relations. Overcoming Violence, Ecojustice and Identity and Diversity will all be overarching themes for the Assembly. NARA will take place at the same time as the concluding gathering of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission where the final report will be presented to the government and the involved churches. Although part of the Assembly will include WSCF-specific activities, participants will also have the opportunity to attend an intergenerational conference organized by Kairos Canada (an ecumenical social justice partner of SCM and WSCF), as well as other side activities planned during the week of gatherings for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work.

Racism and colonialism are at the heart of the foundation of Canada and the United States. Although with some differences in history, both countries were founded following colonial rule by European settlers, whose presence meant displacement of the Indigenous peoples who inhabited the continent before their arrival. First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada and American Indian tribes in the United States have been forcibly displaced from their locations, have been marginalized and subjected to various forms of oppression, genocide and violence.

Neither country has fully reconciled with these aspects of their history and the ongoing reality of its consequences. Racism is alive and well – as seen through disproportionate incarceration rates of Indigenous and African American people and other oppressive phenomena (including Islamophobia, ill-treatment of immigrants, etc.) – and by the recent history of residential schools in Canada or boarding schools in the US, where Indigenous children were taken away from their families and placed in primarily religious-run schools so that they would assimilate into main stream society and thereby lose their identity.

Because of the continued reality of how colonialism has affected their country, some Canadian intellectuals have started to draw on the Latin American concept of “coloniality”, which points to the ongoing nature of colonialism, i.e. the fact that this part of North American history lives into the present. Racism is a fundamental part of the ongoing nature of coloniality and has to be tackled to ensure the promotion of right relations.

As with all cultural and societal issues of injustice, large swaths of both countries' populations have countered both racism and coloniality through mass social and political movements and have worked for the liberation of oppressed people and for restorative justice. Student movements have always been on the forefront of these movements, as is the case of the Civil Rights Movements in the 1960s. It is noteworthy that Martin Luther King Junior was the keynote speaker at a WSCF sponsored conference in Athens, Ohio in 1959. At that event, the

Rev. Dr. Jim Forbes -- as he explained during the opening worship of the 34th WSCF General Assembly in Montreal, Canada in 2008 -- was inspired to join the sit-in movement. In line with the history of student movements, the Student Christian Movement of Canada has been committed to solidarity work with Indigenous peoples for many years and the SCM-USA has taken on racism and mass incarceration as one of their major working foci.

Serving the community, Solidarity and Advocacy, Biblical and Theological Analysis and Reflection.

Although the WSCF has not yet developed a global theological agenda, a shortcoming reflected in the work of our region, worship, Bible study and theological reflection are at the heart of all regional programs. At WSCF-NA events, we have provided multiple spaces to explore creative worship, read the Bible critically and learn new theological insights. During all conferences we worshiped God, creating space for the Holy Spirit to speak and move, acknowledging our common belief in Christ, and confessing our need for God's presence and action in our community. Our times of worship have also served an exposure to the many denominations, cultures and traditions that our students represent, and an opportunity for living ecumenism. At WSCF-NA events we focus on the prophetic element of SCM and their rootedness in contextual and liberation theologies as well as in transformative ecumenism

Despite the many challenges the WSCF faces, the same we are here to debate and tackle, the North America Region has provided a variety of opportunities to students and young adults to engage in leadership training, community service, solidarity and advocacy work. In a recent report about her experience at the Agape Ecumenical Center, a US participant wrote the following: "I feel immensely blessed to have had the opportunity to meet so many fellow SCM members from around the globe, and to be humbled by their life stories and the work they each do in their respective communities. It was great to see a diverse body – of different ages, denominations, languages, and nationalities that had a common interest in local community efforts and global social and political change. My newly found friends put human faces to international movements and issues and humanized events that would otherwise just be headlines. In meeting members from the Philippines, Mexico, Palestine, Georgia, and other parts of the U.S (and keeping in contact with them), I feel more globally aware of grassroots movements. Though I live in a 'university bubble' where people are generally erudite and aware of global issues, I have enlightened many of my college friends about issues they were unaware of and have gotten them interested in the efforts of the SCM and WSCF".

This is what we do. We change young people's lives so that they may transform the world. We provide educational opportunities for students to engage in critical processes in the service of God's prospect in an abundant life for all. I am inspired by the young people whom I meet and work with because they are the prophets reading the theological signs of the time. They are midwives defying Pharaoh and weaving liturgies of life. They reflect the image of the God who weeps seeing her creation tapestry in shatters but gathers the broken pieces, the small and big actions for peace, justice and the preservation of the cosmos, and weaves them back into an even more beautiful mosaic.

May the WSC-NA and the whole Federation continue to confess our complicity in empire, embody theologies of resistance, profess our creed in a new earth and a new heaven and dance with the God of the rainbow and of the whole inhabited world.

Appendix 10: Report of the General Secretary

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Bogotá, 27 February – 5 March 2015

We are Many, We are One – Sent to Build God's Peace

We come together at a time when the pervasiveness of violence is overwhelming. We heard in the opening Bible Study testimony from many delegates speaking to this point in sharing their own contexts. In our first day together we have been drawn a vast overview of the history and consequence of war; the suggestion that while world war is not taking the same form as in the past, the past has led us to a situation in the present of unprecedented violence to the earth, to the community, to diversity itself, to lives and nations; and the proposal that greater inter-linkages on a world scale are required to address and change this violence and conflict into just peace. A vision of linkage and unity that resists the effect of Empire to lull us, or force us, into a false unity. We have been given initial insights into the conflict –torn soil we meet on here in Colombia; a picture of how inter-related local situations of conflict, violence, and war are to the global forces of greed and domination; as well as a call from the brothers and sisters here to continue in resilience, faith, and solidarity so that we may have more voice together and learn from each other the art of peace as we go.

In our hearts are the missing 27 in Mexico who represent so many more, the beheaded Christians and others in Syria, the growing threat of Boko Haram in Nigeria, and we could go on and on.

In our hearts are also the many young people affected by violence and the increasingly narrow spaces, even in educational environments, to inspire and equip young people to leadership that would counter these trends.

Our calling to be peacemakers is a serious one. Our calling to pull our minds, hearts, spirits and energy together to reflect on the revitalization of our movement WSCF is in the light of Gods call upon us all to be sent out to build peace, with the belief that we will be positioned to do more, together.

The Context

As Horacio has indicated in his address this morning, giving 4 main points, the external environment regarding our sustainability is and will continue to be different. This does not have to be read as a negative reflection on the state of affairs in an organization. In spite of the very significant contribution they may have made in the past, today there is need for all organizations to develop ways and means of responding to the various threats and challenges that are posed by a fast-changing world under pressure from the forces of globalization and technology, which is reducing the role and space of human beings. Many organizations are realizing the need to make changes and shape up their responses to the issues and concerns that would keep them relevant and radical in their characteristic and contributions to transform the world. WSCF, as a world student movement, cannot keep itself aloof from the need to transform itself, both programmatically and organizationally, to keep alive the Vision and Mission of our fore-fathers and fore-mothers: “to call members of the academic community to faith in God, to discipleship within the life and mission of the Church and to help them strive for peace and justice in and among nations”.

At the same time we will not be honest with ourselves, if we did not realize that we are largely in this situation today because we have been ignoring the signs of the times, and writings on the wall, systematically for years and decades. There was a report commissioned by the Executive Committee in 1989 that clearly pointed out that the financial problems would continue as symptoms of a lack of coherence between different levels of the organization, and also made suggestions to address the systemic issues. Our previous chairperson, Ken Guest, said in his address to the 2008 Assembly that in his assessment the WSCF “has just turned the corner and escaped from a disastrous situation. But the situation is fragile and we are by no means assured of our success. The next four years will be crucial to solidifying our organization and beginning to expand our work.” And exactly at the moment he was speaking these words, unknown to us at the time, the global financial crisis of 2008 hit. EED, the Funding Partner of the EAP, made efforts for over a decade to accompany us in a change process of the programme from a movement building fund to a development program with strategic goals and up-to-date planning, monitoring and evaluation processes. We are still finding it hard to re-orientate the Federation to meet these basic requirements. The cycles of financial crisis for decades, based in our assumption that we can continue to operate the way we always have, has become so integrated into our life that many Federation leaders have taken it as almost a positive characteristic of student work that we operate so thinly. It is not a virtue but a sign of neglect to develop ourselves properly. It is only if we recognize that there is something systemic at work that we will be able to change it. It is only by recognizing that we are the unwitting inheritors of some death-dealing systems/models of dependency reducing us to the status of “recipients” rather than “self-reliant systems and traditions” leading us to be the sharing and caring community that we will have the courage to uplift ourselves from a personality-oriented approach to a collective-responsibility to move forward into an era of independent and self-reliant movement drawing on its own vast and rich resources – human, material and spiritual.

Let us now recall the virtues of the movement that has enabled hundreds and thousands of students together across theological and cultural boundaries and provided avenues for creatively contributing to the Church, and Society, in turn, providing leadership in the Churches, the ecumenical movement, the governments and social movements for justice, freedom, equality and dignity.

Imagine of a community of students and young people all over the world, and a committed network of Senior Friends of this community, in 118 movements with a common commitment to:

- God
- Dialogue
- Diversity, the valuing of diverse faith traditions, genders, age culture, tribe, country
- Peacemaking with justice at the root
- And Unity through our common commitments and ultimately through Jesus Christ

Who aim to study and reflect critically and analytically on the vast problems confronting humanity today, like poverty and injustice, oppression and discrimination, climate change and global warming, war and violence and, in turn, go to discover the root causes of these problems with a drive and devotion to resolve these for a better world for themselves, their fellow students, and other members of the community.

Who include in this study a deep engagement with the Bible, theologically reflecting and socially interacting as the key motivators to action-reflection.

Who cultivate the leadership of young people, recognizing what they, what we, have to contribute towards creating a better future.

Who make serious efforts to recognize the inherent potentials and equal status of women, and re-discover interactive procedures and processes for joint leadership of women and men as partners in creating a better world.

Who believe in venturing on relevant and meaningful paths for following Jesus Christ with the accompaniment and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and who devote time to celebrate the communion with God and community life of Worship.

Actually, it is not what we have to imagine, because this is who we truly are in reality.

This has been our proud heritage, and this is who we are today.

Why then, with this beautiful picture are we facing a crisis?

This Report would strive to point out some of the facts of the past six years in the life of the WSCF, so that we have some basic elements to piece together a fuller picture of our movement, and may provide some indicators to our discussion shaping its future as a world ecumenical student movement for transformation.

But I would be failing in my duty if I only pointed to the facts. Thus, I would make an attempt to analyse and interpret the story of the past few years from the perspective of the one who has had a very rich and challenging journey in the WSCF as its first Woman General Secretary with a theological and social orientation.

It is not the only perspective, but would probably provide a firm foundation to building a future of this prestigious movement, as it comes from a totality of experience and interaction during the past six years, which could be defined as the most crucial and critical years in the life of the movement, when not only the world, but the Church as a whole, witnessed tremendous changes as a result of crisis of conscience, crisis of leadership and crisis of identity. Thus, it is only by sharing our perspectives that we will see better the multi-faceted reality that we are in, leading to the reality that we can be. And that is why this General Assembly is such a crucial and unique one in the history of the WSCF. We are gathered in all our diversity and in all our unity, to discover both anew and to see where it will lead us to into the Future of ecumenical movement at this juncture of human history.

Actually, from the very moment I interacted with the WSCF, I recognized the unique character and content of this world ecumenical student movement. Thus, becoming a part of it is not a mere coincidence or an accident. This is the time for me to testify that it was a conscious and deliberate choice to join it, of course, as part of God's Will in my personal journey of faith and action.

In the feminist discourse, we have learnt that it could be valuable to be explicit about factors of one's true identity that influence our experiences of the world and our perspectives about it. It is only then we can more fully engage with others, and be engaged. All of our identities are so multi-faceted that we can truly run the risk of simplifying or straight-jacketing in one another. But on the other hand, especially in a community like ours, we must also acknowledge that various aspects of our identity that we are born with or that we cultivate ourselves, do influence our being in the world and our interactions with others. When we know this, we can become more intentional.

I am a white woman who was born in the United States and holds only one passport. I did not grow up in the SCM as it was not active in my country during my student years. My mother is Roman Catholic and my father a Protestant, and both love Jesus Christ. So my ecumenical vocation and experience began at a very young

age. My best friends as a child were Buddhist twins, so my commitment creating understanding and collaboration between different religions also started at a young age. I studied philosophy as an undergraduate, and later went on to study Theology, earning a Master of Divinity. Between these times, I spent two years teaching at a University in China, which gave me an entirely different orientation of the world. I spent considerable time as a Student Leader, and later gained experience as a Youth Worker, Teacher, and Student Minister working to engage the issues of our communities, such as the need for racial reconciliation, defence of true critical education, women's leadership, justice for indigenous people in my country.

When I first met WSCF, I was living in Geneva and had recently concluded a contract for the Episcopal Church in Europe. I met my predecessor, Michael Wallace at a local ecumenical event, and we naturally began speaking about student ministry. He was looking for a new staff to support the growing needs of the WSCF IRO. After some initial conversations, I applied and was hired as a Global Project Manager. From the very first moments, listening to Michael and reading the website (even though it was very outdated way back in 2007), I could see something very unique and very significant, something that I had been trying to piece together in my own life and, therefore, valued it right away. At the same time, I wondered as to why I hadn't heard about this historic, still very agile and dynamic movement.

As I began my job, and met students virtually and in person, my first impressions about them 'being the harbingers of change with compassion' were confirmed. This has remained true, without exception, till today. The students and young people, and the SCMs they are a part of, are people that are drawn to all of the creative qualities and constructive actions of WSCF which I have already mentioned above. I remember the very first student I met in person from Finland at a Regional Assembly telling me that the SCM was the only place in her educational experience that encouraged and allowed her to engage students of other disciplines and to think critically and develop herself. Through working with the Ecumenical Assistance Programme, I learned of the deep commitment in the SCM work and projects all around the world to developing students' potential and engage students in meeting the needs of the community around them. How students in the SCMs all over the world are involved in thought and action with all of the pressing, cutting-edge issues in our world today. When I went over to the UN and spoke with friends and colleagues, and shared about this community and the engagement of Christian students in all of the major social, economic, and political issues of our day, colleagues were invariably impressed, and usually shocked because of the stereotypes many have of Christians.

I felt and continue to feel now it to be God's calling, and a great privilege, to have the opportunity to be connected with this community.

With this background, I would like to take you to the significant journey of the past few years. Though it is humanly impossible to narrate and interpret all of these, I will attempt to be succinct, touching the main points with a few examples, yet be comprehensive enough to contribute meaningfully towards constructing the contours of a picture to emerge in the future, and to the discussions in the days ahead.

Programmes and Activities

Statutory Meeting:

Gradual unfolding of a Strategic Plan: a new mechanism for WSCF!

It is important to understand that the motivation to begin a strategic planning process that would begin to bring a different kind of coherence to the work in the regions began before the recent financial crisis.

The previous officers intentionally began the task of reconsidering how we work together as a unified Federation, integrating national movements, regions and the global. Unifying themes were set by both the 2004 and the 2008 General Assemblies. These included: empire, migration, women, students, identity, diversity and dialogue, Climate Justice, Economic Justice; the IRO organized Inter-Regional Leadership Training Programmes focused on the theme and the regions were invited to do programming based on the yearly theme as well.

The 2008 Assembly went a step further by establishing Commissions at the GA that sought to focus on areas of work that could be in common for most SCMs. They were:

- Ecumenical leadership formation
- Advocacy and Solidarity
- Radical Renewal of Bible and Theology
- Capacity Building

And there was a resonance with the delegates that these did, in fact, provide a useful way of framing common work, and thus became the framework for the strategic plan that was built following the GA.

In the gradual unfolding of the strategic plan in a series of staff and officers, and ExCo meetings, several global programmes were articulated. This new level of inter-regional or global programming was conceived as both increased initiatives and activities from the IRO and activities from the regions. By the time we reached 2010 when I became General Secretary, the ExCo acknowledged that such global programming was desirable and also needed to demonstrate to our partners clearer and more correlated global goals for our movement and to show that the high level of administrative cost at the IRO was linked organizationally with the regions and to the results of the activities in the regions.

During this period the practice of holding staff meetings, staff and officers meetings, and ExCo meetings on-line, usually Skype, began. This, on the one hand, enabled us to work on building teams and to continue to work together more effectively between the rare in-person meetings as in the past. On the other hand, there are inherent problems with online meeting as well, ranging from time zones, to justice issues in access to technology and language challenges, to less personal communication, to the meetings taking too much more time from the staff, officers, and ExCo members' schedules.

- **2009 Staff and Officers Meeting in Geneva**
- **2010 Executive Committee Meeting in Beirut**
- **2011 Staff and Officers Meeting in Geneva**
- **2012 Executive Committee Meeting in Berlin**
- **2013 Executive Committee Meeting in Busan**
- Online Executive Committee meetings, staff meetings, officers meetings

EAP

The Ecumenical Assistance Programme had an earlier incarnation as a relief programme by which the SCMs raised money for suffering students after WW1. It was initiated by students and they raised what in today's money would be about 450 million Swiss francs between the years of 1920 and 1924 because of their shock at the conditions young people were in, without the basic necessities of food.

It became a grant administered by the IRO focused on movement building. In other words, SCMs who needed funds to operate applied for the fund and the ExCo decided where to distribute the grant based mostly on knowledge of the situation of the SCMs. The money supporting this Ecumenical Assistance Programme (EAP) was from German mission funding.

The journey took another turn when the German church funding was split between mission and development funding. The EAP moved into the development funding category and the partner, EED, worked to communicate the implications of this change, but we were slow to hear.

I was hired in 2008 as a Project Manager largely because the IRO knew that this EAP was threatened. The whole community was beginning to process the fact that WSCF may lose the money already in 2009/2010. I remember minutes from the AP regional meeting that was beginning to process what will happen to the SCMs if we lose the money because many of them rely on the funding for core funding.

The donor funded and required an evaluation of the results of which have been shared, and are still available to anyone who wishes to see them. They affirmed that the work the SCMs are doing in the community, and among students, can qualify for development funding but that we need to accept this new framework, articulate projects and not general “movement-building” goals, and not only that, but achieve a relatively high level of project management/project design with goals and indicators, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. They also expect that if called a global programme, it is necessary to set the individual project goals in continuity with global strategic goals. This has been difficult without a global strategic plan defining specific goals for the movement as a whole, which was the case before this past period.

One important result of the evaluation was also that it gave an insight into not only the EAP but also the working of the Federation in general. The way in the IRO raised funds for the EAP and the WSCF salaries for IRO staff and regional secretaries has been more or less the same. The argument is a good one – that these monies animate the work that we know is worthy on all levels, inter-regional, regional through the core funding from the German mission church funding body and national through the EAP from the German development funding body for the most part. The fact is, that this model has been changing for many years and we have not been able to hear it. The demands for the development project funding, whether from the traditional German funder or new sources of government funds is high in terms of project management, but the new reality is that administrative funding is increasingly hard to find as funding in ecumenical and church agencies is declining. Even, and especially for, administrative funding, demonstrating the strategic goals of the organization are needed today.

So, following the external evaluation

- **Pre-2008 EAP in danger, hired project manager, began programme evaluation**
- **2008 (Montreal, Canada) EAP/PME workshop and presentation to GA by Project Manager and Evaluator**
- **2009 (June, Jordan) Training in evaluation, establishment of “Excellence Team”**
- **2010 Three regional trainings in PME:**
 - **Argentina (Spring)**
 - **Lebanon (Summer)**
 - **Sri Lanka (December)**
- **2010 (Lebanon) Meeting of Excellence Team prior to ExCo meeting**
- **2010 Loss of Project Manager**
- **2011/2012 Loss of EAP**
- **2012 (Egypt) EAP training for staff and officers**
- **2013/2014 Unable to re-gain EAP**

Advocacy

- **2008 Establishment of Advocacy and Solidarity Committee (ASC)**

- 2009 (NYC) ASC Meeting
- 2009 (NYC) Training and engagement in Ecumenical Advocacy Days (WCC)
- 2011 (Nairobi) ASC meeting and training
- 2008-2014 many on-line meetings
- 2011 ASC launches Water Campaign
- 2008-2012 WSCF hosts Zimbabwe Advocacy Office
- 2013 Advocacy training together with WOSM and YMCA to mobilize volunteer leadership at major UN sites –
 - a. Nairobi
 - b. New York
 - c. Paris

UN-related

- 2007-present Participation in yearly International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO) meetings and mobilization, served on Task Force 2008-2013
- 2008-2014 (Paris) Delegation to UNESCO
- 2007-2014 (NYC) Delegations to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – collaboration with WCC and Ecumenical Women
- 2010 (Mexico) Delegation to World Youth Conference
- 2011 (NYC) Delegation to High Level Meeting on Youth

Leadership Training

- 2009 (Thailand) Inter-Regional Leadership Training Programme (IRLTP) on *Identity, Diversity and Dialogue*
- 2010 IRLTP for ExCo on Climate Justice
- 2013 (Jordan, Palestine) IRLTP on *Overcoming Violence in the Middle East*

Ecumenical Processes

- 2008-2010 Planning Group and participation in Edinburgh World Mission Conference
- 2010 Kirchentag
- 2010 (Jamaica) International Ecumenical Peace Convention (IEPC) – Communications Team sponsored by WCC
- 2011 (October, Indonesia) Global Christian Forum 2nd Global Gathering
- 2012 Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME)
- 2008-2012 Ecumenism in the 21st Century
- 2010-2014 (Italy, summer) AGAPE political and theological camps

SCM visits

During this ongoing critical period there has been only a very small budget line for the travel of the General Secretary. At the same time, there have been so many consistent struggles to face that it has actually been difficult to spend the time – even if there is funding – for visits to movements.

It should be a primary work for the General Secretary to visit SCMs, to learn more from them about their situations, work, needs, and dreams, and to contribute to movement building of the SCM and of the movement as a whole. And to make sure that our work is continually being based in our vision and mission as SCMs and as a

movement as a whole. I have only spent my limited travel budget on two SCM visits, which were to the centenary celebrations of SCM India and SCM Sri Lanka. Can you imagine a situation where the general secretary of the WSCF has to struggle with a decision to spend 1,500 USD to visit two movements who are celebrating their 100 years. I did struggle with this as Bishop George can attest. It was embarrassing even to raise the issue with him, almost like an insult. This is the tension I have been living these years. I did prioritize this visit because even in the midst of this crisis, what are we doing if we do not maintain and strengthen relationships and mutual reinforcement, in celebration and in struggle.

It is being in fellowship with students that has given me the greatest satisfaction, joy, and motivation in what has been otherwise a tough period. In each region, in each movement, I have had the privilege to visit, I saw motivated, talented, justice-loving, God-loving students everywhere I went. I had too little time with them and I am dissatisfied with this. But I am truly grateful for each moment I did have, and I wish to inform each student and young adult I met all around the world and through our global programmes that without exaggeration that apart from God, it is you and the witness you have given me of the significance of your work in the SCMs that has kept me motivated and given me the courage to continue.

- Philippines
- Indonesia
- Sri Lanka
- India
- Korea
- Kenya
- Ethiopia
- Togo
- Ivory Coast
- United States
- Canada
- Lebanon
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Finland
- Germany
- Norway
- Sweden
- Denmark
- France
- United Kingdom
- Argentina
- Colombia

Partner relationship-building

Why are we losing partners?

Why did I prioritize partnership-building?

Why are we gaining partners?

Why did I focus on both fundraising and strategic partnership building?

What have been the results? We have increased visibility of our organization and have created new paths for partnership that will invite immediate action after this Assembly.

- Norway
- Germany
- Finland
- Sweden
- Council for World Mission Assembly
- EAA Assembly
- WCC Assembly
- ACT Assembly

Meetings in Geneva

- **WCC Central Committee**
- **WCC donor roundtables**
- **Countless personal visits by partners here for other meetings**

WSCF-organized Partner Meetings

- **2008 (Montreal) Partner Meeting at GA**
- **2009 (Geneva, May) Partner Meeting**
- **2011 (Geneva, June) Partner Meeting**
- **2015 (Bogotá, March) Partner Meeting at GA**

Note about Geneva – Is Geneva the place to keep the IRO?

Senior Friends Meetings

Why did I make meeting and relationship-building with Senior Friends a priority?

Mandate of 2008 GA

We need our Senior Friends to find our future, both our sustainability and our foundations.

- **Jakarta, after Global Christian Forum (GCF)**
- **2012 Manila, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME)**
- **Indonesia, Poverty, Wealth and Ecology (PWE) global meeting**
- **2012, Crete, WCC Central Committee**
- **2013, Busan, WCC Assembly**

Centennial Fund

- **2008-2014 (May, Bossy) Yearly in-person meetings**
- **Regular teleconferences**
- **Participation in ExCo in-person meetings 2010, 2012, 2013**
- **Participation in ExCo online meetings by Treasurer Jorge Domingues**

Capacity

- **Missioners**
- **Interns**
- **Volunteers**

- **Donation of UN computers**
- **10,000USD grant from Google for online services**

Communications

Increase of online presence – in every area we cannot do all that wish. In every area we have been doing as much, or even more, that we can.

- **Facebook**
- **Twitter**
- **You Tube**
- **Featured in WCC and other ecumenical news**
- **Online donation tool**
- **Website, work in progress**

Improved reporting

- **EAP If we did improve our reporting, why did we lose the money? I feel the agitation about the EAP.**
- **Red Book – consolidated narrative reporting, regions and inter-regional, focus on global strategic plan**
- **ExCo mandated consolidated financial reporting**
- **Use of video**

Consultation

- **2014 (Bossey) Consultation on Identity, Diversity and Dialogue**
- **General Assembly and processes launched after postponement**
- **2015 (Bossey) Future of the Federation Task Group**
- **31 October 2015 Give One, Be One**

Mission/Vision

Are we present and leading thought and action in the academic world? Are we leading change in the ecumenical movement? Are we attracting students to the extent we would wish? Are we making the advocacy impact we desire? Do we demonstrate deep enough solidarity with one another? Do we have channels to pool our resources and learn from and transform one another? Perhaps there is a crisis of vision, without even realizing it ourselves.

I believe the reason we do not realize it is that we retain a strong sense of Mission among us. We recognize one another. Something draws all of us together, especially those issues and concerns that I mentioned in the beginning. There is a strong SCM spirit that moves us all over the world, and which is moving us right here in this Assembly as it has in the past.

But this is not a substitute for Vision, which means having a clear sense of what we are about as a movement in this day and time. What is our purpose or goal in a more specific sense? What are we working towards? What are we accomplishing and how do we make it known to one another, the Church and the world at large? What is our vocation in relation to the other players?

It will be easier to talk about changes to systems and structures if our students and young leaders are motivated with a Vision of what we can accomplish together.

It is not only about money. It is not primarily about money. I am 100% convinced that we will find the money we need from external and from internal sources and strategies, once we have a clearer Vision along with greater unity demonstrated in our thoughts and actions.

Identity

I have seen again and again that students and youth from SCMs recognize each other very quickly when they met. Look at what is happening here. This affirms that there are shared qualities of identity all around the world. At the same time most WSCF students are not very aware that they are part of a global movement and if they are, they could even be suspect or critical because they do not see the value added. This goes back to the lack of a clear and articulated vision, but also to identity.

There are different understandings at work about our core identity, which we can find summarized in our name, World Student Christian Federation. The period of regionalization was not only about regionalization, but also it was about the student revolution and the subsequent change in views of leadership, staff, and the Church, which brought about changes in the way we view our work and life together.

Christian

We commonly affirm the Christian identity and at the same time maintain a space free of close doctrinal definition to live the ecumenical mission and to be a space of learning and exploration. We are less clear about our identity vis a vis the Church and our mission in relation to the Church.

I believe that a part of our unique vocation and potential for influence lies precisely in nurturing close ties with the Church while keeping our independence as well.

It is striking that we see in practice all over the world and at all levels, programmes with worship, Bible study and theological reflection as core. We all have the desire to let our theology lead and guide us into our action, as well as to ground it, but are still struggling to realize this.

Student

I've been reflecting a lot on the student identity of WSCF and believe it is truly another key. It is good that we have the flexibility to include youth and young adults in our SCM life, the student identity is a distinctive of WSCF that gives us a distinct role amongst other youth movements and initiatives and more close clues to our methods and focus. Students study. Students ask questions that inform and challenge. Students think critically. Students are preparing. Students need inputs from those of other generations.

Here we get into the role of Senior Friends, not only for the financial sustainability of WSCF but in its flourishing in other ways. We pioneered the creation of youth-led spaces which continues to be important and gives us distinctiveness. At the same time, we see that the transfer of money is often lacking in terms of the depth of our heritage. Even very recent news becomes quickly forgotten with the rapid turnover of leadership. We have also moved away from a sustainable and well-functioning organizational practice that can support an evolving and dynamic movement. Further invitations to Senior Friends to join the current WSCF leaders and structures to lend their expertise, knowledge and support could help.

Federation

The founders of the Federation wished to form the Federation as a relatively agile structure that could adapt to the needs of students at different movements and different generations. The way in which we should operate today is very different than in 1895 and yet this principle of greater agility is very important. We have become very heavy, too top-heavy, not in terms of international over regional or national, but heavy in governance at every level, at least regionally and inter-regionally. At the same time we do not have stable or adapted structures to give us freedom.

World

The skeleton of the WSCF has held us together by the grace of God. Through all the years, students and senior friends are transformed by regional and inter-regional encounters with others. There is a unique learning process and friendship-forming that motivates and forms unique leadership. And yet, in the regionalization process from '68 until now, we have given less attention to the common spaces, the global spaces to the point where what we conceptualize, what we study, what we do together is extremely spare and weak. It is hard for us to recognize it because we all value the world connections, the local global analysis we do engage, such as in Chris' talk yesterday. I have heard some of our leaders suggest that we do adequately in habit the world or global space because the infrastructure to allow us to initiate exchange, solidarity, dialogue, action from anywhere to anywhere is still there and is acted on. I do not suggest that we limit the free exchange within the network or the initiative; however this is not the same thing as intentionally joining together in purpose, in practices, in strategies, in reporting.

What has developed is more similar to a federation of regions with a common ethos than a federation of national movements with regions for the "practical purposes of the ongoing work of the Federation" as the Constitution states. The regions serve less to translate common priorities to the movements and galvanize action and to translate national and regional priorities to the whole body through the ExCo, the IRO, and even the General Assembly than to initiate and run their own priorities and activities. We see the neither the General Assembly nor the ExCo spend time much time really gathering the analysis of what is happening, what is needed, what is wanted by the SCMs or the regions in order to see what we can do about it together. We ourselves, the other youth movements, the Church, the ecumenical movement, and the world are consequently not benefitting nearly as much from our potential.

There is not a right or wrong solution here. It is discernment about how the WSCF wants to mobilize, according to what we find most effective and in line with our vision and goals. I do not believe it is in the best interest of WSCF to consider regions separate entities because it would be difficult if not impossible over time to be sustainable and even more important because it would likely bring further fragmentation, sending more confusing messages to the outside world about who are and what we do. Our strength, and especially today in the inter-connected globalizing world, our power and potential to contribute to transformational change, both to student and the communities, is much stronger.

Strategies

It is my strong impression that the relative absence of clear Vision and goals has led to a near absence of strategy, at least, at the ESCF level. We have a hard time recognizing this because we all care about all the most relevant and recent issues, we engage them, we do so more deeply than most other groups around us. But it still does not amount to Strategy based on a clear Vision.

The global strategic plan we have developed step-by-step and have to implement programmatically is a new exercise for us. I have been part of unfolding this and have witnesses a change of perspective over the past

six years among staff and officers, among the Executive Committee as a whole, and to some degree among regional committees. The staff have common frameworks now by which to evaluate, and develop what is happening in the Federation. The staffs of secretaries meet regularly as colleagues online. The programmes have seen some signs of success, with implementation at different levels, SCM, regional, bi-regional and inter-regional. We have begun to interpret and report these results as a whole. But still there is ambivalence because the more strongly articulated strategic plan implies a shifting of the way things work. So, there is natural tension as the regional staff and bodies are accustomed to working largely independently. Also, as the expectation is put on the regional secretaries to put efforts into global programming. Many of them are stretched to breaking point because there has been no alteration to the system, and their job descriptions are already completely unrealistic. It is not a devaluing of the regional work and identity to suggest a shifting of the way we integrate or inter-connect more deeply; it is just a different way of working. This will then require some structural and system change and development.

Many people will understand it in different ways, these past years. There have been many difficulties for the general secretary to make. Since I began we have through financial instability and have been for all purposes bankrupt. Many people do not understand it, because they have not been in the process of it, or were in the process through the ExCo but did not internalize it. I would like to be very popular general secretary but had to make hard decisions to sustain the WSCF starting with the staff. This has been a cycle going on for many decades but I have been working with my colleagues for it to stop now. From the beginning, when I ran for general secretary in 2010, I knew that I was entering an impossible situation but felt that the WSCF has the internal resources to rise to the challenge. I knew that it would be tough combination because the moment needed survival skills and triage and at the same time creative visioning and development through practical steps.

Plan

Put simply my goal from the day I began as general secretary was to create better interconnectedness internally, inter-generationally with our Senior Friends, and with our partners. And the Executive Committee has given their initial endorsement to this work. This very simple trinity still forms the basis of my strategy. What I can report is that we have taken many steps and have made much progress on each. We are not facing this challenge in a vacuum but with a lot of change already behind us, a lot of leanings, and experiences

Clarify and articulate the Vision that we are called to today

Continue the global strategic planning process, which develops a framework of coherence for the regional and inter-regional work

Choose more limited focus for global programme lines, something that the Federation believes it can make a needed and unique contribution to change, for example interfaith cooperation for peace. Include global leadership training and capacity building focus to the regular work of the IRO.

Transform the IRO focus toward being a communications hub, a centre for knowledge management for the global organization for regions and SCMs , both to gather together the inputs from all around the world and all levels of the movement on our common thematic and programmatic lines and to gather all the diverse voices and stories of the work on all the many priorities held by SCMs and regions.

Engage a process of Constitutional revision-

- **Reduce the size of the ExCo. I would suggest a group of 3 or 4 officers, members from the missing regions, all of whom have terms of reference that are skill-based and at least 3 of the 6**

are students. The group could then have a Senior Friend member. And a Centennial Fund Board member and the General Secretary with voice only. This will enable the group to meet more frequently, have the skill sets required, hold the global vision in mind, and make decisions more quickly.

- In a longer but committed process develop a vision and then supporting systems that clearly define the inter-relationship between the IRO and regions and by extension the GA and ExCo and the regional committees.
- Consider new models of leadership, as well as organizational development, such as “simultaneous leadership” where leaders lead leaders and each person takes alternate roles of leader and follower to learn the most from one another and make the most of all peoples gifts
- At the same time, empower the office of the GS and clarify leadership roles amongst the general secretary, regional secretaries, officers, and Executive Committee
- Change name of IRO to international of global office to indicate WSCF’s global identity and status instead of reducing the role of the IRO and GS to facilitate the “real” work in the regions.
- Innovate funding sources- and organize our work and communications accordingly-governmental, foundation, UN, private sector 2013-2014 ex. Submissions of EAP with new framework to United Nations Democracy Fund, Alliance of Civilizations, Swiss government, private sector, 2015 MUN
- Affirm that Senior Friends are a part of the WSCF community and have a role to play as Senior Friends as accompaniment, expertise, mentoring, and championing of WSCF and its leaders, and integrate them into the system (for example a Senior Friend in the ExCo)
- Develop strategies and work together with core ecumenical partners
 - WCC (Ecumenical peacebuilding initiative, for example)
 - ACT Alliance
 - Global Christian Forum
 - Council for World Mission

Integrate Give One, Be One Campaign into the DNA of SCM life as one part of a sustainability strategy that will give us core funding for WSCF global and regional work as well as SCM work

Conclusion

We are Many, We are One-Sent out to Build God’s Peace

This is who we are! This is what we want!

It is time for us to see more clearly in the mirror. It is time to recognize that the way we sometimes do not interact directly and respectfully with one another, or get caught up in the web of political manoeuvring for insignificant considerations based on self, region and status, it proves to be self-destructive in the long run. Or, at least, limits the depth of dedication of the Christian community towards Vision and Mission. Can we take up the identity of students and ask questions, dig deeply, think seriously, act decisively, work collaboratively, listen carefully, learn more from our experiences? Can we have the honesty to review some of the organisational culture we have perpetuated in the past that produced negative results? Can we trust God and one another, and ourselves, enough to open ourselves to a change process in order to build on all the good work going on in the SCM and WSCF all around the world, and to realize our potential as unity-in-diversity? You have the world in front of you, which throws up more threats and challenges to us than the Movement was born, nursed and nurtured by our fore-fathers and fore-mothers. This movement is historic, unique and relevant even today, and it is needed to be strengthened and guided into the future. We should not be motivated in this meeting by crisis, though we

must be realistic and bold enough to seriously respond to it pragmatically and meaningfully. We must gain a Vision for our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ at this time, when the world needs a loving, a just and a compassionate God, and those who follow such a God. It is up to us. It is up to you, now, this week, and in the days to come to take up the challenge of redefining, reshaping, and revolutionizing this historical ecumenical student movement. I have total confidence that we can rise up to meet this challenge and rise up to our potential if we want to do it and see the need value to do so.

I would like to end by thanking the officers for their perseverance, the Senior Friends for your accompaniment and commitment, the Partners for your openness and for the challenges you issue to help us reach our potential, to the students for your faithful response to God's call to mission. To my colleagues Jean-Luc and Natascha in the IRO thank you for your dedicated work and the enjoyable effective team we have formed that is actually attracting volunteers to come and increase our capacity. And finally to my colleagues, the regional secretaries, Amos, Elsy, Luciano, Marcelo, Natia and Sunita. I respect your work and your commitment. We have been on the front line of this change process and it is normal that in the midst of the stress we hold different perspectives and have to struggle together. I am proud of what we have accomplished together and appreciate the positive moments of collaboration that we have found. I wish that this will increase for the benefit of the WSCF and for us.

God's blessing on each of you individually, on your SCMs, on your regions, on the senior friends so committed, on the partners who are catching a vision for the potential of deepened collaboration, and on the WSCF as a whole, all of these pieces being woven together into a greater unity.

Ut Omnes Unum Sint—that they all may be one (John 17:21).

Appendix 11: Terms of Reference of the Future of the Federation Task Group



Future of the Federation Task Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Future of the Federation Task Group follows up the decision of the World Student Christian Federation Executive Committee to initiate a process of institutional analysis. The group was mandated by the World Student Christian Federation Executive Committee in September 2014 after the postponement of the General Assembly in order to make use of the additional time to develop specific recommendations to the GA around the future vision and sustainability of the Federation.

The group is tasked to:

1. Bring a detailed analysis of the Federation's current situation, and especially, concrete recommendations about the way the Federation may develop its vision and structure to the General Assembly. The group will be asked to look at all aspects of the Federation's life and functioning including the relationship between levels of the Federation, local, national, regional, inter-regional, global; and the governance.
2. Delegate some members of the Task Group to report to the General Assembly.
3. Work on a methodology for a learning session at the General Assembly, based on the results of the analysis done by the task group.

Membership

The Future of the Federation Task Group will be comprised of stakeholders of the Federation with experience in the analysis, design and restructuring of organizations, particularly those related to the ecumenical movement and/or those that work at a global level.

The group should remain small enough to work efficiently as a Task Group and to be affordable for an in-person meeting, and big enough to include a diversity of perspectives and expertise.

The group's mandate will begin in December 2014 and end at the General Assembly February-March 2015. And future work will be determined as a part of the overall recommendations and GA decisions.

It is essential to have:

1. members who bring different perspectives and resources to the group;
2. members who have a proven commitment to the Federation's life and future, experience in the SCM and WSCF or in a related partner organization;
3. members who have strong knowledge and expertise in regional and/or global organizational operations.

Once the members of the group are selected and have agreed, a chairperson for the group from among the group will be designated.

Accountability

The secretariat of the group will report on the group process and progress to the Executive Committee

The Group's report and recommendations will be delivered directly to the General Assembly.

Working methods

The group will adopt a shared learning approach. This includes:

Methodology

The methodology will include the following, but will be finalized among the group with the support of an external facilitator

- Analysis of relevant documentation (reports or analysis done in the past)
- Questionnaire sent to relevant stakeholders (selected SCMs, regional leadership, regional offices, partners).
- Interviews with relevant stakeholders by Skype.

- Skype meetings for analysis and coordination of activities.
- In person meeting, 3 days, end of January 2015.
- Report to ExCo in Skype meeting.
- Learning session at the General Assembly.

Group meeting

- The group's main work will be accomplished through a 3-day in-person meeting in Geneva, Switzerland by the end of January 2015;
- The agenda for the meeting will be generated by members of the group in discussion with one another;
- Meeting papers will be circulated, by email, in preparation for the meeting as far in advance as possible given the short timeframe;
- Meetings may include small group discussions to share experiences and learning;
- Non-members may be invited to join moments of the group meeting to aid discussion of a particular topic;
- Secretariat for the group and organisation of the meeting will be provided by the WSCF general secretary, with support of other WSCF IRO staff;
- Online meetings will be held before and after the in-person meeting for the purpose of planning the in-person meeting beforehand and, following, to consolidate any follow-up work and finalize preparations for the General Assembly.

The process may be facilitated by a professional external to WSCF provided funding is found.

Sharing of information and resources (including confidential materials)

- It is each group member's responsibility to make clear
- Where a matter shall remain confidential and not for discussion outside the group.
- When sharing documents, members should make it clear if there is a restriction as to
 - Circulation of the documents beyond the group, and/or
 - Copyright/use of contents

Results

The group is expected to deliver the following documents:

- Final document with main conclusions of the analysis and recommendations for the consideration by the General Assembly.
- Proposal of methodology for a learning session at the WSCF General Assembly based on the conclusions and recommendations made by the task group. This can include communication to the delegates in advance to the Assembly.

Budget

To be finalized. The budget costs will be the cost of a 3 day in-person meeting and the cost of an external facilitator to help develop the process and facilitate the in-person meeting. This meeting will take place if the funds can be raised for it. In the case that they cannot, the group will revert to online work.

November 2014

Appendix 12: Future of the Federation Task Group Report to the GA (prior to its amendment and adoption)

Future of the Federation Task Group Report

A REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION IN BOGOTA, 2015.

Executive Summary

The World Student Christian Federation has faithfully served students of the ecumenical movement for over a century. Thousands of ecumenical and civil society leaders today credit the Federation with empowering them in their quest for social justice and firm ecumenical relations.

However the organization that fostered the growth and development of so many now finds itself in a situation of seemingly intractable crisis demanding immediate action. As the financial situation of the Federation has eroded over the years, so too has the clarity of its vision and purpose, the trust and confidence of its officers and executives, the relationship between the regional and the inter-regional offices. Sustained financial problems have resulted in years of increasing deficit and debt. Lack of clarity of function and responsibility has compromised the opportunity to tackle these seemingly intractable problems meaningfully and advance the work both regionally and inter-regionally. Relations with donors have soured in some cases and stronger project management skills are called for.

The Federation has now courageously examined its weaknesses. With prayerful consideration, this Task Group recommends a series of bold and immediate steps that hopefully will avert financial crisis and the closing of the regional and inter-regional offices. These measures will pave the way to a re-designed Federation, the structure of which will follow a clearly articulated and agreed vision and mission. This report outlines draft measures for approval by this General Assembly (GA) to be developed by a five person transition team.

We propose that this GA elect ExCo and officers here in Bogotá, as planned. However, we recommend the implementation of the General Secretaries elections be suspended for six months while an Interim Staff Coordinator be appointed for that period, who will work with a transition team of five people set up to support the management of the Federation, composed of the chairperson and the treasurer of the Federation, a student representative, a Centennial Fund representative and a senior friend. In six months' time, this group will recommend further steps for the reconfiguration of the Federation for action by the Executive Committee. Already in Bogotá, the Federation will begin a process of stabilizing relations with donors and raising funds for the transition period. The emergency phase for recovery shall not last longer than six months with a further two years

being designated for the full implementation of the reconfiguration proposals. These recommendations must be understood to be a composite package, the success of which is connected to its entirety and not to its parts.

We believe the Federation should not only be salvaged but reinstated to its role as a source of strong ecumenical leadership, grounded in biblical teaching, that will enable it to regain its place at the heart of the ecumenical movement.

Members of the Future of the Federation Task Group were:

Salters Sterling (chair)

Pretty Mubaiwa

Yong Ting Jin

Chris Fergusson

Dalia Lakis

Jorge Domingues

Introduction

The Future of the Federation Task Group (the Task Group) was established by the Executive Committee of the WSCF towards the end of November 2014 and invitations to serve on it were sent by email on 1st December, 2014. The persons invited to serve were:

- WCRC General Secretary and Senior Friend, Chris Ferguson (Canada)
- Centennial Fund Board of Trustees member, Salters Sterling (Ireland)
- US Trustees, Jorge Domingues (Brazil/United States)
- ME Senior Friend, Dhalia Lakis (Lebanon).
- AP Senior Friend, also chair of the Search Committee, Yong Ting Jin (Malaysia).
- Africa SCM programme staff person and WSCF rep to EAA HIV and Aids Strategy Group, Pretty Mubaiwa (Zimbabwe)

The Terms of Reference (see previous appendix) of the group were established as:

- Bring a detailed analysis of the Federation's current situation, and especially, concrete recommendations about the way the Federation may develop its vision and structure to the General Assembly. The group will be asked to look at all aspects of the Federation's life and functioning, including the relationship between levels of the Federation, local, national, regional, inter-regional, global; and the governance.
- Delegate some members of the Task Group to report to the General Assembly.
- Work on a methodology for a learning session at the General Assembly, based on the results of the analysis done by the Task Group.

The first meeting took place by Skype on Monday 22nd December, 2014 and among the business undertaken was the establishing of dates for future Skype meetings, three of which occurred before the 'in presence' meeting which took place in Geneva from 12th to 14th February, 2015. The Task Group places on record its gratitude to the Council for World Mission for making the Geneva meeting possible by providing a grant for that purpose. In addition to the FoFTG members present in Geneva, we had the presence of Clarissa Balan, former Co- Secretary General of the WSCF, deputized for Yong Ting Jin who was unable to attend but who remains a member of the group. This funding also made possible the employment of Ms Sandra Cox to act as interview organizer, recorder and minute writer for the Geneva meeting. To Sandra, the Task Group records its great gratitude.

Shanta Ready Alonso joined the group as a liaison with the officers and the ExCo in all meetings. Marco Fornerone also joined the group in Geneva as requested by the Chairman of the Federation as an additional witness/observer. In the very short time available it was impossible for the group to undertake a full review of the entirety of the Federation. Provision for that to be done is included in our recommendations.

To assist the work of the Group, the Secretariat in Geneva provided a significant body of documentation through *Dropbox* as advised by the Chairperson of the Federation. In addition to this documentation, the Chairperson provided a list of those within and outside the Federation who should be consulted, either by questionnaire or in person.

The Group at its outset noted, and was happy to accept the role of the observer/witness Shantha Ready and similarly for Marco Fornerone as noted above. It is the understanding of the Task Group that both observer/witnesses have been able to attest to the solidity of the manner in which the Task Group conducted its business.

In its working, the Task Group experienced itself as in the best tradition of the Federation, both men and women, some older and some younger, representative of the regions, ethnicity and cultures of the world, and equally, of different church traditions. The Task Group is happy that the Executive Committee was able to achieve such a rich range of balance. The harmony with which the Task Group was able to pursue its business should also be recorded.

Analysis of the current situation of the WSCF

As it began its work, the Task Group recognized that while the immediate crisis is one of lack of, or absence of, financial resource this is itself symptomatic of a deeper crisis. Nevertheless, since it is the financial situation that has occasioned the establishment of this Task Group, we begin our report by noting that the existence of the Group is part of a tripartite agreement between the World Student Christian Federation, the Centennial Fund of the World Student Christian Federation and the World Council of Churches. That agreement, which provides for the underwriting by the Centennial Fund of the debt of the WSCF owing to the WCC, also required that there should be a fundamental review of the future of the WSCF. The debt stands at c. 200,000USD.

The cash available to the Federation at the end of December 2014 only permitted a continuation of salary payments, reduced by 30%, until the end of March 2015, and this only by the early payment of a subvention from the Centennial Fund of 105,000USD in two parts. It should be noted that, in order to provide this amount of

money, the Centennial Fund had to use capital. It did not have sufficient cash reserves to cover the amount. So effectively, the Task Group was asked to begin its work in a situation where that bit of the Federation dependent on the work of the Secretaries in the Regions and the staff in Geneva would cease to function by March 31st 2015.

In reflecting on this, we became aware that there are elements in the whole life of the Federation which had not a full awareness of how dependent the regional work of the Federation is on the fund-raising success of the Geneva office. That realization in turn caused the Task Group to remind itself that the totality of the Federation is represented by more than 100 national organizations, organized by the General Assembly into six regions, serviced by the General Assembly's Executive Committee and by the staff in what is designated the Inter-Regional Office (IRO) in Geneva and the staff in the regions. It is worth pausing to reflect that it is this composite whole that is in fact the World Student Christian Federation.

With this as the background situation, the question then arises *how did such a situation of financial insolvency arise?* The documentation provided to the Task Group indicates quite clearly that the financial problem is one of long standing, repeatedly exacerbated by General Assemblies whose costs have not been fully met and to which in more recent times must be added the additional cost of an office in North America and an upward adjustment of staff salaries. Because of the importance of the IRO as the money-raising arm of the Federation as far as core costs are concerned, it should also be noted at this point that the number of staff in the Geneva Office has been reduced over the period between 2008 and the present time. There therefore must be a question about the capacity of that office to deliver what is required of it by way of money-raising, communication, program organization and administration. These aspects will be further developed as we proceed with our analysis.

At the same time as there was an increase in payroll costs of the Federation, there has been a situation externally in which the opportunities for raising undesignated funds have been declining and the requirements associated with fundraising have become more onerous and the fundraising climate itself more competitive. The Task Group advises that the information available to it clearly indicates that ecumenical agencies operating globally are experiencing the same problem.

For many areas of the Federation, particularly some of the national Movements in Africa, Asia/Pacific and Latin America/Caribbean, the withdrawal of Ecumenical Assistance Program (EAP) funding has been a traumatic experience. Insofar as it affected the payment of national Movement fees to the international Movement and produced an amount of income for administration of the program, it had an impact on the income of the IRO Office. The Task Group used the withdrawal of EAP funding as a lens through which to review the consequences.

In the first instance it is clear to the Task Group that the failure of the Federation to continue to receive EAP money arose from the fact that the Federation was unable to meet the application, monitoring and reporting requirements of the funders. In asking the question *why should this have been the case?*, we noted that the matter of capacity is a crucial issue. The demand by funders – and this is applicable not only to EAP sources but is today generally applicable – for transparency in the submission of project proposals, transparency in the exercise of project monitoring and transparency and accountability in project reporting has become much more detailed and pressing.

Given these requirements of the funders, and talking with them, it is quite clear that there are many reasons why the Federation did not continue to receive EAP funding. These can be summarized as:

Lack of personnel capacity and personnel skill in different areas of the organization;

- Poor communications;
- Cumbersome decision-making procedures and structures;
- Lack of clarity of vision as perceived by the funding agencies;
- Perceived lack of overall strategy coordination between and within the Nations and Regions;
- Disjuncture between work proposed and work done.

The Task Group makes it clear that what is specifically true in the area of EAP funding is also more generally true of other funders.

This criticism runs deep into the heart of the Federation and could be received as being very negative. Yes, it does need to be taken on board and dealt with but the Task Group also heard that almost all the funders and partners with whom we have spoken, and certainly the internal friends and members of the Federation, are convinced that there is a major task to which the Federation is called at this time. This task has been identified by our friends, partners and funders as *equipping students and young people to provide ecumenical leadership now and in the future with the explicit characteristic of being centred on justice advocacy*. When such a vision of the Federation is explored further in conversation, it is quite clear that the term “ecumenical” is being used to cover leadership in church and in the world, globally, internationally, nationally and locally, in the public domain and in the private domain. It is a vision of a task which is as challenging and commanding as that which inspired our ancestors in the Movement a hundred and twenty years ago when they spoke of *Christ for the world in this generation*. The Task Group takes great hope and courage and strength from this conviction of those who have been, and are, resourcing us and so we need to find the ways in which what we share with them, and what they share with us, can be made effective in all that we do and in the ways that we do it.

Before moving to examine more closely what needs to be done (a more complete picture of which will emerge in the following section of this report) the Task Group has taken note that where a sense of lack of resource becomes pervasive, then those who as staff and decision-makers have to deal with it begin to experience sensations of frustration, sometimes of anger and of mistrust leading to suspicion among both individuals and groups. The Task Group has noted that this has happened in the Federation and it also noted that there is a lack of knowledge leading to a sense of alienation among some if not all of the national movements whose interests the wider Federation is intended to serve. The Task Group is emphatic that such an atmosphere is not conducive to the best working relationships and conditions for survival at a time of great difficulty. We will return to some of the criticisms we have noted above, about which we have learnt through our reading of the documentation and from the replies given in the questionnaires received and the conversations held in interviews. By way of example, one of those interviewed (as a funder associated with a national SCM) reviewed the current landscape of the Federation in the following terms: *“You have a global budget of 1.3m USD. You should be able to make that work much better than you appear to be doing”*. The Task Group can understand that comment, particularly as it notes the need for even greater transparency in the spending of our money than has been achieved in the updated model in the current issue of the Red Book. The consequences of this appreciation are the need for greater transparency and organizational efficiency. Pursued further, the delay in the publication of the Red Book the Task Force regards as symptomatic of a failure to meet deadlines and an example of poor time management. The failure to meet deadlines is a recurring theme in the information which has become available to the Task Group. Given that the information needed to produce the Red Book is supplied from various sources in the life of the Federation, the implication is that there needs to be much greater co-ordination in and between all those on whom the flow of information depends. The Task Group asks itself: are there critical path analyses operating within the Federation that ensures the supply of information to the

Inter-Regional Office in time to meet reporting deadlines, publication deadlines, and the other needs of a modern communications system using the most current technology? We have noted cumbersome decision-making procedures and structures. This criticism arises from what we have witnessed ourselves and from what has been said to us. Funders had noted that there is apparent competition within the Federation when they receive two or more requests from the same body within the same timescales. From this, they deduce there is no coordination, no systemizing of priorities and on occasions, no clarity of shared vision. When these matters of organization are pursued they quickly lead to issues of strategy and program planning which the Task Group is convinced must be handled urgently and systematically. Such an exercise will involve a review of the current arrangements of the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, the IRO and the Regions. Questions arise such as:

- What would the Federation look like under poly-centric organizational arrangements?
- What would a leaner, less bureaucratic, more program-centered Federation look like?
- How best does the wider Federation add value to the life of the national and local movements?

Viewed from the perspective of effective delivery, the speed with which the decision-making processes of the organization were able to react to the financial crisis – which had been long brewing and finally came to be recognized in the May-July 2014 period in the context of the decision to postpone the GA – is simply not adequate. It also suggests to the Task Group that those who constitute the members of the Executive Committee see themselves as acting on behalf of the regions when on occasion they need to function as corporate decision-makers for a global body, the circumstances of which are so desperate that the welfare of those very regions which they seek to serve is being critically undermined. At this point, it is interesting to note the range of replies that came from the regional and national organizations of the Federation to the question *In your view, who should be involved in rectifying the situation in the WSCF?*, some of the responses said SCM, SCMerS, Senior Friends; others added the historic supporter Churches; most emphasized students but only one seemed to suggest that it should be students on their own. The Task Force is convinced that there is a major degree of wisdom and insight in the answers given to this question. There are other inter-related issues which the Task Group agree need to be stated. These are the absence of any significant reference to Bible Study, Theology and Prophecy in the questionnaire and interview responses when the actual activity and purpose of the Federation was being considered. Given that these have been substantial elements in the programs of previous generations, the Task Group is minded to advise that the process of renewal in these areas should again be given prominence in the life of the Federation. They are fundamental to the designation “Christian” in the global name of the organization. In the dire circumstances of the present condition of the Federation which we have been asked to address, we have come to the conclusions elaborated in the next sections of this report. We have added timeline proposals as to how the issues can be addressed if the Federation is to survive with staff available to service its program and organizational needs.

There was some discussion of the third item in the Terms of Reference of the Task Group, namely, that of methodology. Here the Task Group expressed its sense that the agenda of the General Assembly should be as integrated as possible around the report of the Task Group within the context of the designated theme *We are Many, We are One, Sent to build God's Peace*. The Task Group is also concerned that there should be adequate time for the analytical material in this report, as well as its conclusions and recommendations to be received, understood and where necessary, approved through the work of small groups, non-regional as well as regional, and the work of plenary presentations and the reporting back of group comments.

The Task Group recognizes that it has not been possible to give consideration to the entirety of its Terms of Reference in the time available. It has made provision for the work to continue in the recommendations it has made for the immediate, the intermediate and the longer term periods of what it hopes will be the continuation of a renewed and reinvigorated Federation into the future.

Measures necessary in the next six months

In organizing the discussions of the Task Group we have divided these into three categories, the immediate, inter-mediate and the long-term.

- The immediate crisis threatens the survival of the Federation in its current form. The nature of this “emergency” has been clearly outlined in preceding sections of this report. Included in this category are measures that address the immediate problem of finance and take on board the reality of the Assembly taking place at the time of this report.
- The nature of the crisis demands that interim measures must be put in place in order to bring the Federation to a sustainable level. This category refers to a transition which the Task Group has defined as 6 months.
- The above time categories need to be part of a long-term plan which not only ensures sustainability but also the necessary structural and cultural changes that need to take place if this sustainability is to go beyond mere survival.

This section of the report lists the measures to be undertaken in the immediate, inter-mediate and long-term in order to address the crisis.

Immediate

- i.) The Task Group recommends that the Centennial Fund Board, within its legal capacity, continues to support the immediate core funding needs of the Federation. We further recommend that the ExCo and the Centennial Fund in partnership organize a Future of the Federation Roundtable targeted at major funders and stakeholders present at the GA.
- ii.) The Task Group recommends that all levels of the Federation must participate in funding the core staff costs of the IRO and regions.
- iii.) The Task Group recommends that the search process for a general secretary or co-secretaries be halted. The search committee will be requested to look into their current shortlist of candidates and consider them in light of a proposal for an interim staff coordinator who should be appointed for six months to guide and support the reform process during this immediate period. The choice of candidate should preferably be on the basis of a recommendation from the search committee according to an agreed profile prepared by the Future of the Federation Task Group.
- iv.) The interim staff coordinator should work with a management group of five members – the Chair, the Treasurer, a Student and two Senior Friends.
- v.) The interim staff coordinator and this management group will work to fulfill the program agreed by the GA and the program outcomes should be approved by the Executive Committee when it meets at the end of the six month period.
- vi.) The main thrust of the work during this period should be to revise management processes and recommend governance arrangements.

vii.) The ExCo should undertake a review of the General Assembly program to ensure coherence of the different sessions and outcomes expected in light of the Task Group report discussion sessions for two days at the GA.

Inter-mediate

- i.) Develop a budget for the 6-month transition phase.
- ii.) Hire an interim staff coordinator, agree on a job description and develop a 6-month work plan with clear timelines
- iii.) Put in place a transition team that will develop proposals for both the inter-mediate and long-term. These proposals will address the following:
 - i. Governance structure and constitution
 - ii. Management processes and procedures
 - iii. Fundraising and resource mobilization (EAP, grassroots campaign (\$1), fundraising protocol, develop a “case for support” that clarifies the vision and goals, tells the story of the Federation and the impact it has made to young people, communities, the academic community and the church)
 - iv. A plan for community building and transforming Federation culture, including addressing -
 1. the need for healing and reconciliation
 2. The need for a participatory process of strategic planning, including addressing issues around vision and identity
 3. The need for capacity building, and
 4. Communication

Measures necessary in the next two years

After analyzing the current situation of WSCF at global and somewhat at regional level, the Task Group suggested several interventions for the period after the interim six months that should be implemented over the following two years in order to ensure sustainability of structural and cultural change. The Task Group identified seven objectives that should be included in a strategic plan to guide the change process:

Objective 1: Articulate our common global vision and mission understanding for WSCF (including global and regional priorities and concerns). This should begin within the first year, and continue into the second and subsequent years of the plan and comprise the following steps:

- i.) This articulation should be grounded in rigorous biblical, theological and contextual reflection.
- ii.) Develop a clear vision and mission for the organization. Students should be actively involved in developing this vision and mission and the strategy to give effect to it. A clear vision is vital to develop a strong sense of global identity among members and to rebuild their trust in, and sense of ownership of, the global organization.
- iii.) Develop and agree global and regional goals and programs to give effect to this vision.
- iv.) Draw up a detailed action plan to deliver the goals and programs, with specific timelines and allocation of responsibilities. (The more detail, the more convincing it will be to funders.) The action plan should focus on just one or two overarching themes, including ecumenical leadership and theology.
- v.) Develop a financial plan (to include fundraising) to support the organization and deliver its programs.

Objective 2: Reform governance structure and constitution. This should take place within the two year period.

Proposals for governance, the structures of governance and constitutional implications will be produced by the ExCo. These will need to address full inclusion, participation and sense of common ownership, as well as address and eliminate the cost, cumbersomeness and ineffectiveness of the current arrangements. They will seek to preserve in contemporary forms the participative nature of decision-taking while recognizing the need for timely effectiveness. They will derive their integrity from the vision of the Federation and the principle that *form follows function*. They will enshrine team working as the effective outworking of Fellowship as a key experience of the Federation at work.

Objective 3: Improve reporting and documentation of all WSCF activities and events. This should begin within the first year and continue into the second and subsequent years of the plan. It should comprise the following steps:

- i.) Agree a common template for reporting (narrative and financial).
- ii.) Agree frequency of reporting. For example, there should be a quarterly financial report and a quarterly operational report, using the common templates to capture the main events, numbers, dates, challenges and future plans. These quarterly reports will form the basis of a comprehensive annual report for donors, partners and SCMs.
- iii.) Train IRO and Regional staff and SCM staffs to develop these reports and the processes necessary to ensure their integrity and timeliness.

Objective 4: Improve trust and communication between IRO, ExCo, Regional offices, SCMs and partners and donors This should continue from the first six months and comprise the following measures:

- i.) Create mechanisms for genuine sharing of experiences and perspectives through all levels of the Federation.
- ii.) Monthly calendar (template including upcoming activities in all the regions and globally).
- iii.) Monthly or quarterly newsletter (as above).
- iv.) Division of tasks (each month, one regional secretary will be in charge of collecting information from the other regional secretaries and developing the newsletter using the agreed template).
- v.) Activation of social media to communicate with partners and SCMs.
- vi.) Holding regular meetings to discuss specific topics.

Objective 5: Rebuild trust and communication with traditional and new donors. This should continue from the first six months and comprise the following measures:

- i.) Continue sharing information on regional and global activities.
- ii.) Publish a monthly or quarterly newsletter capturing the highlights of monthly activities at regional and global level.
- iii.) Re-launch discussion and contact with traditional donors, even if no current funding is available.

Objective 6: Increase the income of the WSCF (IRO and Regional). This should commence within one year and continue into subsequent years and comprise the following steps:

Clarify the financial situation and agree on shared responsibilities to solve the crisis (involving IRO, ExCo, Regional Offices and SCMs)

Collect membership fees from all SCMs every year (during one of the events in each region).

- i.) Introduce regional support by agreeing a percentage of regional staff costs to be raised from within the regions at national and regional level.
- ii.) Each Regional Secretary (RS) should support the IRO in developing at least one proposal for one global program per year.
- iii.) Strengthen the Be One, Give One campaign, taking into account the lessons learnt from the first launch and utilize the serious commitment of RSs in mobilizing people to donate.
- iv.) Incorporate a practice of fund-raising that is intimately attached to movement building.
- v.) Develop a short documentary illustrating the main achievements among all the regions. A volunteer could be recruited from one region to develop this documentary on an internal DVD.
- vi.) Agree a fundraising protocol and mechanism between IRO and regional offices.
- vii.) Sharing of the quarterly financial report with regional offices and ExCo.
- viii.) Consider regional office structures and recommend appropriate measures.

Objective 7: Clarify roles, responsibilities and line reporting arrangements for staff at different levels (GS, Chairperson, Exco, Regional Secretary, SCMs) This should be finalized within the first year and comprise the following steps:

- i.) Create a culture of solidarity, mutual accountability and interdependence among the different levels of the Federation, with special attention to the staff.
- ii.) Develop agreed Job Descriptions for all WSCF staff.
- iii.) Develop a clear organogram showing how each position relates to the others and the line management that links them together.
- iv.) Suggest an appraisal system for all staff including GS in order to increase accountability and efficiency. This would allow action to be taken when a person is not performing according to the terms of their job description.
- v.) Suggest some team building exercise or program to improve relationships between staff at different levels.
- vi.) Develop a division of tasks for the global programs – donor relations, communication, finance etc. – that will clarify rolls and responsibilities and maximize the effectiveness of available staff. With the lack of staff, check availability of regional secretaries and of ExCo members to provide additional support on specific tasks.
- vii.) Develop a recruitment plan for interns or volunteers to assist on specific tasks (these could be members of SCMs)
- viii.) Develop a plan to involve the SCMs, ExCo members and the regions in the revision of the current form of General Assembly and in the planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation when GA takes place. Consider whether to keep the same structure or modify it.

Objective 8: Improve the capacity of the IRO, regional staff and ExCo members. This should begin immediately and continue.

- i.) Develop a capacity needs assessment for staff. The result will enable the Federation to develop a capacity building program for staff. This could be tailored for the staff or utilize other training programs.
- ii.) Consider the areas of capacity building mentioned above such as movement building, project management, monitoring and evaluation, biblical and theological reflection, leadership etc.
- iii.) Consider asking Senior Friends to undertake specific training, mentoring and coaching.

Conclusion

The word “dysfunctional” does not appear in this report and yet it appeared and reappeared in our conversations in the Task Group as we tried to come to terms with the fact that this 120 year old institution had slid into near terminal decline, into a crisis much more severe than any it had previously experienced in its history even at times of war. In the conversation of the Task Group, crisis came to represent opportunity and opportunity came to represent a new call from God. Our Task Group meetings began with prayer – prayer from the traditions of both Eastern and Western Churches. We commend our report to the prayerful study of the General Assembly meeting in Bogotá in February/March 2015. We commend it, confident that God’s will and God’s wisdom will prevail as together all the members of the Assembly are equipped to be the builders of God’s Peace in a world of heart-rending violence, deeply disturbing injustice and self-perpetuating unrighteousness. We rejoice to have been invited to serve the General Assembly as members of the Task Group on the Future of the Federation.

Appendix 13: Report of the Centennial Fund

The Centennial Fund

Information reported to the 35th General Assembly

by Jorge Domingues

1. Members of the Centennial Fund Board

- AJ Finley – Canada
- Salters Sterling – Ireland
- Jorge Domingues – Brazil/US
- Jannes Hutagalung – Indonesia
- Mathieu Durrleman – Switzerland
- Alexandre Roumi – Lebanon – Student representative
- Youhanna Kamal – Egypt – WSCF Treasurer (ex-officio)

2. Beginnings:

Authorized by WSCF GA:	1990
Received first contributions:	1994
Initial capital:	\$100,000
Minimum accumulated capital required to initiate distribution of income:	\$1,000,000

3. Support for WSCF:

Initial grant to the WSCF:	2004
Initial grant designation:	2004 General Assembly
General Assemblies supported:	2004, 2008, 2015
Annual program/salary grants to WSCF:	2004-2015

4. The Centennial Fund in Numbers:

Accumulated capital in 2014:	\$1,441,221
Assets in 2014:	\$1,375,063
Historical average annual performance of investments:	6.6%
Program grants to WSCF 2008-2014:	\$515,000
Salary support to WSCF 2008-2014:	\$465,000
Salary support to WSCF 2015:	\$30,000
Grant support to WSCF GA 2015:	\$75,000
Commitment to repay WSCF debt to WCC in 2016:	up to \$200,000

Appendix 14: Final Report and Recommendations of the Future of the Federation Task Group



Future of the Federation Recommendations

**35th General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation
Bogota, 27 February – 5 March 2015.**

This document contains the original recommendations of the Future of Federation Task Group and it incorporates the suggestions made by the regional groups for improvement. In order to identify the changes to the original document, we used the following procedure:

- Any new material added to the document is identified by underlines
- Any material deleted from the document is identified by ~~striketrough~~

I. Measures necessary in the next six months

In organizing the discussions of the Task Group we have divided these into three categories, the immediate, inter-mediate and the long-term.

1. The immediate crisis threatens the survival of the Federation in its current form. The nature of this “emergency” has been clearly outlined in preceding sections of this report. Included in this category are measures that address the immediate problem of finance and take on board the reality of the Assembly taking place at the time of this report.
2. The nature of the crisis demands that interim measures must be put in place in order to bring the Federation to a sustainable level. This category refers to a transition which the Task Group has defined as 6 months.
3. The above time categories need to be part of a long-term plan which not only ensures sustainability but also the necessary structural and cultural changes that need to take place if this sustainability is to go beyond mere survival.

This section of the report lists the measures to be undertaken in the immediate, inter-mediate and long-term in order to address the crisis.

Immediate

1. The Task Group recommends that the Centennial Fund Board, within its legal capacity, continues to support the immediate core funding needs of the Federation. We further recommend that the ExCo and the Centennial Fund in partnership organize a Future of the Federation Roundtable targeted at major funders and stakeholders present at the GA.
2. The Task Group recommends that all levels of the Federation must participate in funding the core staff costs of the IRO and regions.
3. The Task Group recommends that the search process for a general secretary or co-secretaries be halted. The search committee will be requested to look into their current shortlist of candidates and consider them in light of a proposal for an interim staff coordinator who should be appointed for six months to guide and support the reform process during this immediate period. The choice of candidate should preferably be on the basis of a recommendation from the search committee according to an agreed profile prepared by the Future of the Federation Task Group.

4. The interim staff coordinator should work with a management group of ~~five~~ six members – the Chair, the Treasurer, a two students and two Senior Friends, one of whom shall be a member of the Centennial Fund. Each region shall nominate one or two student candidates to a pool from which the ExCo shall appoint two (1 male and 1 female), taking into account expertise and experience (L/A/C; AP & E]
5. The interim staff coordinator and this management group will work to fulfill the program agreed by the GA and the program outcomes should be approved by the Executive Committee when it meets at the end of the six month period.
6. The main thrust of the work during this period should be to revise management processes and recommend governance arrangements.
7. The ExCo should undertake a review of the General Assembly program to ensure coherence of the different sessions and outcomes expected in light of the Task Group report discussion sessions for two days at the GA.
8. Develop agreed Job Descriptions for all WSCF staff, especially for the General Secretary [A]. Roles and responsibilities of all staff must be clear. [moved from Objective 7 to “Intermediate” (A)]
9. Agree a common template for reporting (narrative and financial). [moved from Objective 3 (A)]
10. Agree frequency of reporting. For example, there should be a quarterly financial report and a quarterly operational report, using the common templates to capture the main events, numbers, dates, challenges and future plans. These quarterly reports will form the basis of a comprehensive annual report for donors, partners and SCMs. [moved from Objective 3 – (A)]

Inter-mediate

1. Develop a budget for the 6-month transition phase.
2. Hire an interim staff coordinator, agree on a job description and develop a 6-month work plan with clear timelines
3. Put in place a transition team that will develop proposals for both the inter-mediate and long-term. These proposals will address the following:
 - a. Governance structure and constitution, including a study of the size of the ExCo [E].
 - b. Management processes and procedures
 - c. Fundraising and resource mobilization (EAP, grassroots campaign (\$1), fundraising protocol, develop a “case for support” that clarifies the vision and goals, tells the story of the Federation and the impact it has made to young people, communities, the academic community and the church, including sale of products in the context of a non-profit making organization.[A]
 - d. A plan for community building and transforming Federation culture, including addressing the need for healing and reconciliation

- e. The need for a participatory process of strategic planning, including addressing issues around vision and identity
 - f. The need for capacity building
 - g. Communication (The website would provide information on work of the Transition Team) [A/P]
4. The Transition team will report in this way: [AP & LA/C]
 - iv. To the Exco, at the end of the first month.
 - v. To the SCMs, a progress report at the end of 3 months.
 - vi. To the Exco, a final report on actions and recommendations
 5. The duration of the transition should be six months, extended to nine months if needed
and a decision on the extension be made in the fifth month [ME & NA]

II. Measures necessary in the next two years

After analyzing the current situation of WSCF at global and somewhat at regional level, the Task Group suggested several interventions for the period after the interim six months that should be implemented over the following two years in order to ensure sustainability of structural and cultural change. The Task Group identified seven objectives that should be included in a strategic plan to guide the change process:

Objective 1: Articulate our common global vision and mission understanding for WSCF (including global and regional priorities and concerns). This should begin within the first year, and continue into the second and subsequent years of the plan and comprise the following steps:

- This articulation should be grounded in rigorous biblical, theological and contextual reflection.
- Develop a clear vision and mission for the organization. Students should be actively involved in developing this vision and mission and the strategy to give effect to it. A clear vision is vital to develop a strong sense of global identity among members and to rebuild their trust in, and sense of ownership of, the global organization.
- Develop and agree global and regional goals and programs to give effect to this vision.
- Draw up a detailed action plan to deliver the goals and programs, with specific timelines and allocation of responsibilities. (The more detail, the more convincing it will be to funders.) The action plan should focus on just one or two overarching themes, including ecumenical leadership and theology.

- Develop a financial plan (to include fundraising) to support the organization and deliver its programs.

Objective 2: Reform governance structure and constitution. This should take place within the two year period.

Proposals for governance, the structures of governance and constitutional implications will be produced by the ExCo. These will need to address full inclusion, participation and sense of common ownership, as well as address and eliminate the cost, cumbersomeness and ineffectiveness of the current arrangements. They will seek to preserve in contemporary forms the participative nature of decision-taking while recognizing the need for timely effectiveness. They will derive their integrity from the vision of the Federation and the principle that *form follows function*. They will enshrine team working as the effective outworking of Fellowship as a key experience of the Federation at work.

These proposals may require action that requires constitutional change. In such a case, the Exco will develop and conduct a process in consultation with the SCMs [ME]

Objective 3: Improve reporting and documentation of all WSCF activities and events. This should begin within the first year and continue into the second and subsequent years of the plan. It should comprise the following steps:

- ~~Agree a common template for reporting (narrative and financial).~~
- Agree frequency of reporting. For example, there should be a quarterly financial report and a quarterly operational report, using the common templates to capture the main events, numbers, dates, challenges and future plans. These quarterly reports will form the basis of a comprehensive annual report for donors, partners and SCMs.
- Train IRO and Regional staff and SCM staffs to develop these reports and the processes necessary to ensure their integrity and timeliness.

Objective 4: Improve trust and communication between IRO, ExCo, Regional offices, SCMs and partners and donors. This should continue from the first six months and comprise the following measures:

- Create mechanisms for genuine sharing of experiences and perspectives through all levels of the Federation.
- Monthly calendar (template including upcoming activities in all the regions and globally).

- Monthly or quarterly newsletter (as above).
- Division of tasks (each month, one regional secretary will be in charge of collecting information from the other regional secretaries and developing the newsletter using the agreed template).
- Activation of social media to communicate with partners and SCMs.
- Holding regular meetings to discuss specific topics.

Objective 5: Rebuild trust and communication with traditional and new donors. This should continue from the first six months and comprise the following measures:

- Continue sharing information on regional and global activities.
- Publish a monthly or quarterly newsletter capturing the highlights of monthly activities at regional and global level.
- Re-launch discussion and contact with traditional donors, even if no current funding is available.

Objective 6: Increase the income of the WSCF (IRO and Regional). This should commence within one year and continue into subsequent years and comprise the following steps:

- Clarify the financial situation and agree on shared responsibilities to solve the crisis (involving IRO, ExCo, Regional Offices and SCMs)
- Collect membership fees from all SCMs every year (during one of the events in each region or by bank transfer with proof of payment)[E].
- Introduce regional support by agreeing a percentage of regional staff costs to be raised from within the regions at national and regional level.
- Each Regional Secretary (RS) should support the IRO in developing at least one proposal for one global program per year.
- Strengthen the Be One, Give One campaign, taking into account the lessons learnt, for instance, allow regions to modify the global campaign according to their needs, contexts and possibilities. [E] ~~from the first launch and utilize the serious commitment of RSs in mobilizing people to donate.~~
- Incorporate a practice of fund-raising that is intimately attached to movement building.
- Develop a short documentary illustrating the main achievements among all the regions. A volunteer could be recruited from one region to develop this documentary on an internal DVD.
- Agree a fundraising protocol and mechanism between IRO and regional offices.
- Sharing of the quarterly financial report with regional offices and ExCo.
- Consider regional office structures and recommend appropriate measures.

Objective 7: Clarify roles, responsibilities and line reporting arrangements for staff at different levels (GS, Chairperson, Exco, Regional Secretary, SCMs) This should be finalized within the first year and comprise the following steps:

- Create a culture of solidarity, mutual accountability and interdependence among the different levels of the Federation, with special attention to the staff.
- Develop a clear organogram showing how each position relates to the others and the line management that links them together.
- Suggest an appraisal system for all staff including GS in order to increase accountability and efficiency. This would allow action to be taken when a person is not performing according to the terms of their job description.
- Suggest some team building exercise or program to improve relationships between staff at different levels.
- Develop a division of tasks for the global programs – donor relations, communication, finance etc. – that will clarify rolls and responsibilities and maximize the effectiveness of available staff. With the lack of staff, check availability of regional secretaries and of ExCo members to provide additional support on specific tasks.
- Develop a recruitment plan for interns or volunteers to assist on specific tasks (these could be members of SCMs)
- Develop a plan to involve the SCMs, ExCo members and the regions in the revision of the current form of General Assembly and in the planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation when GA takes place. Consider whether to keep the same structure or modify it.

Objective 8: Improve the capacity of the IRO, regional staff and ExCo members. This should begin immediately and continue.

- Develop a capacity needs assessment for staff. The result will enable the Federation to develop a capacity building program for staff. This could be tailored for the staff or utilize other training programs.
- Consider the areas of capacity building mentioned above such as movement building, project management, monitoring and evaluation, biblical and theological reflection, leadership etc.
- Consider asking Senior Friends to undertake specific training, mentoring and coaching.

Objective 9: Implement a process to consider the move of the IRO, or, to relocate the Inter Regional staff to a more cost efficient location. This should be initiated by the ExCo immediately and be completed in the next two years.

- Cheaper city [AP & E]
- A country where the movement is strong [AP]
- Visa and work permits easily obtainable [AP]
- Strong partner(s) and church relationship(s) [AP]

- Consider office affiliations related to Geneva, e.g. Middle East [AP]
- Consider a global south location [E]

Appendix 15: Report of the Search Committee

Report of the WSCF Search Committee 2014-2015 to the 35th General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation Bogotá, Colombia

Introduction

The ExCo has appointed a Search Committee (SC) of 6 persons representative of the six regions, comprising of 3 men and 3 women. The role of the SC is tasked for the election of the future leadership of the WSCF where names will be recommended for the position of General Secretary to the ExCo; and for the various Officers' positions (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Treasurer) to the General Assembly that was originally set in August 2014 but postponed to February 2015.

Upon receiving the mandate of the WSCF ExCo in December 2013, the Search Committee set out to do its tasks through regular meetings on Skype as well as email communications from January to August 2014; and subsequently September 2014 to January 2015.

Search Process

The whole search process from the announcement of the various officers' positions to interviews and short listing were completed by July 2014 with the impending task of a second interview at the GA site.

The SC closed its process upon completion of a first short listing. We informed the "shortlisted candidates" to attend in person a second interview in Bogotá prior to the GA events. However, at the close of the search process prior to the GA (originally scheduled in August 2014) the SC was prepared to bring a report to the GA highlighting the problem and lack of applications for particularly for the Vice-Chair position. There was a general lack of female applications and candidates especially for the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

Particularly for the position of Vice-Chairperson, we have one female candidate out of 4 applications. The SC faced difficulty in the process of assessment and short listing. Given just one female applicant, we were unable to shortlist a female candidate for the Vice-Chair position.

Subsequent to the postponement of the GA, the SC met at the end of August to deliberate on several matters arising. We reported to the ExCo followed by making a recommendation regarding the re-opening of applications for the position of the female Vice-Chairperson. The SC stepped up its task in the first week of December re-opening and calling for new applications for this said position. By the closing date 10 January 2015 the SC did not receive any new applications though a reminder was sent out before the deadline.

The SC met on 24-26 February in Bogota when a second interview was conducted on 24-25 with the shortlisted candidates.

Recommendation

i.) The SC met and endorsed the decision in bringing this as part of the report to the GA with a recommendation that there be a re-opening of applications for the female Vice-Chairperson and that the new ExCo will attend to the process of election.

ii.) Here are the details in brief about the applications and shortlisted candidates:

Chairperson – 3 applications: 3 males; one each from Asia-Pacific, Europe, Middle East. **Shortlisted:** all 3 candidates. In the first week of February, one candidate withdrew for personal reasons. At the GA site on 28 February, the second candidate wrote to the SC to withdraw his candidacy.

PROPOSED NAME:

Marco Alfredo Fornerone/Italy

Vice-Chairperson (Student) – 2 applications: 1 female and 1 male. Both are from Asia Pacific.

Shortlisted: 1 male candidate

PROPOSED NAME: Immanuel Kitnan/Sri Lanka

Vice-Chairperson – 2 applications: 2 males, both from Africa.

Shortlisted: 1 male candidate

PROPOSED NAME: Masimba Kuchera/ Zimbabwe

Treasurer – 2 applications: 1 male from Africa; and 1 female from Asia-Pacific.

Shortlisted: 2 candidates

PROPOSED NAMES: Bronwyn Claire/Australia **and** Félix Kokou Aklavon/Togo

Each candidate will give a brief presentation to the GA prior to the elections. In addition to this, the SC has compiled a short bio-data of each candidate on a separate page.

Report presented by the WSCF Search Committee 2014-2015:

- Annika Foltin, Germany
- Florence Kanyike, Uganda
- Linwood Blizzard, USA
- Yarkus Perez, Chile
- Youhanna Kamal, Egypt
- Yong Ting Jin, Malaysia

CHAIRPERSON: Candidate

Marco Alfredo Fornerone, Italy, Europe Region

Experience

- An active member of Fgei/Italian SCM since 2002
- In 2006, elected in Fgei executive body; served for two terms until 2011
- 2010-2014 - WSCF Executive Committee (ExCo) member; also serves in the ExCo
- Personnel Committee
- Europe Regional Committee - serves in both administrative and thematic work
- Minister in the Waldensian Church in Italy (Reformed)
- European Council of Churches

Vision-Mission

The Federation has to be *transforming and transformative*. *Transforming*, to be related to a changing world, and *transformative* agent, inspired and nurtured by the announcement of the Kingdom of God. The Federation has the responsibility to raise the awareness of social and political relevance of our common faith. The Federation is a precious space for inclusion and reconciliation of people of identities and upholding their diversities. A specific role of the Federation is to train, empower and enable students to theologically and critically thinking from their socio-personal and socio-political realities/context.

Interview

- He has a strong background to serve the federation from his participation as SCM member of the Italian movement and pastoral ministry in the European churches.

- He has a strong passion to serve the Federation for students as Student Federation He is very convinced that the Federation is of students and for students.
- From his participation in the ExCo during the recent years, he has a deep knowledge and critical awareness of the federation, in particular the challenges and difficulties/crises confronting the Federation.
- He has important skills and capability to work in team and collective spirit and consensus/democratic model.
- He has participated/contributed in the preparatory committee of an EYCE training course on Conflict Transformation.
- He has firm foundational theological and ideological perspectives
- He has strong ideological-theological vision and perspective for the life and work of the Federation - sees the vision statement that WSCF is called to be Prophetic voice in movement and society.
- WSCF is a global community, community based on sharing of power and good governance; a community of students led by and for students with an important role to empower students to be prophetic in the context of peoples' struggles.
- He believes in WSCF leadership as a collective democratic in sustaining the life, character and function/governance of WSCF.
- He places strong emphasis on theology; theological formation and facilitation for the empowerment of students; for pastoral care and safe spaces for students.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Candidate

Immanuel Kitnan (Student), SCM-Sri Lanka, Asia-Pacific Region

Experience

He has wide experience within WSCF on various levels and in ecumenical student/youth networks:

Local: Participated in National Student Christian Movement of Sri Lanka since 1996

- General Secretary of SCM-Sri Lanka 2006-2009
- Participated in National Christian Council of Sri Lanka and involved in Ecumenical Student and Youth Network (EASYNET) Sri Lanka; YMCA; Ceylon Bible Society

Regional: Standing Committee member of WSCF-AP 2008-2014; Human Rights Committee

- AP 2006-2009; Christian Conference of Asia-CWP 2008-2012
- Association of Christian Institute Of Social Concern Of Asia

International: WSCF ExCo member 2008-2014

Vision & Mission

- WSCF be ecumenical in nature and Christ Centred in perspective based on the prophetic tradition;
- vision for the Federation as a minority/unique community called to be open with different critical understanding of different sensitive issues such as Gender and Woman empowerment. His participation and contribution are well grounded and visionary in theory and practice.
- He believes in restoring/creating an intellectual leadership space for/in the WSCF that was lost or disappearing.

Skills

- Able to interpret the work and needs of the Federation to churches and the wider ecumenical movement;
- open and receptive to nurture team spirit and team work among the Officers' team;
- possesses leadership skills;
- participated in a wide list of WSCF leadership formation/development programs/trainings on national, regional and global levels as well as in other ecumenical organizations, e.g. human rights and gender workshops;
- highly recommended and endorsed by his movement as well as by his church, the Presbyterian Church.

Given his rich pool of experiences and skills, involvement and commitment he will make a good leader for the position of Vice-Chair.

Interview

He advocates for relevance to maintain and cultivate new partners while ensuring transparency and accountability. Upholds collective decision making. Great experience and confident about way forward. In the light of current experiences of WSCF facing crises, he sees the need for good governance giving emphasis to 8 aspects: consensus model in decision-making processes; participatory process; guided by rules and laws (constitution); effectiveness-efficiency; accountability; transparency; equitable and inclusivity.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Candidate

Masimba, Kuchera, SCM-Zimbabwe, Africa Region

Experience

- Has experiences in WSCF work on national/regional/international levels
- He has been involved with local SCM of Zimbabwe, leader at national and Regional levels
- He has served as Vice-Chair of the WSCF Africa region
- He belongs to the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
- He is involved in World Council of Churches (WCC) - has been a member of the Commission of Churches on International Affairs; member of the Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network.

Vision & Mission

A visionary individual, understands and uses his partially impaired condition to illustrate the importance of having a clear vision "I'd rather be blind but having a vision than being sighted and having none." (*Quoting Hellen Keller*)

Committed to a Federation that applies faith to address the needs of students and youth

He recognizes the important role of Senior Friends and the promotion of inter-generational dialogue. He sees leadership as an opportunity that comes with responsibilities. He believes in inclusivity and envisages a self-sustaining model.

Skills

Possesses leadership skills as demonstrated from jobs held and organizations he belongs to Open and receptive to nurture team spirit and team work among the Officers' team Proposed a 5-pronged model:

Meaningful communication; institutional audit; networking and resource mobilization; teamwork and resourcefulness.

Interview

Committed to ensuring that the goals, priorities and mandate of the General Assembly are acted upon in accordance with the Constitution. He believes in team work and an opportunity to all. Despite his partially impaired condition, Masimba is an independent and selfless individual. He possesses a wide experience and skills required for the post. He is willing to dedicate time and resources to WSCF; and believes in team collective work.

HONORARY TREASURER: Candidate

Bronwyn Claire/Australia, Asia Pacific Region

Vision

- The Federation to become a dynamic movement of students, connected through virtual and physical communities, working for the transformation of the world for peace and justice
- Move away from in-person program meetings to online communities where our worldwide network can better connect the different perspectives of hierarchy and pedagogy
- Develop leadership training programs and experiences for its members that enable students to grow into the leaders of the Church and world to their faith and works
- More focus on programs for transformation of students into leaders. Financial support will grow as organisations recognise the importance of youth becoming part of the Federation and participating in our programs.
- Flexible organisational structure for students are able to connect with each other and learn from specialist

As Honorary Treasurer

- Applying risk management to assessing WSCF programs, systems, and partnerships
- Greater understanding of the interconnectedness of the work of the Federation with its fundraising
- Clearer communication management
- Building relationships to understand underlying actions, programs and people the expenditure items represent

SCM Experience

Vice-Chair, WSCF (2012 – present); Treasurer, Australian SCM (2010 – 2014); Representative from Asia-Pacific Region, WSCF Executive Committee (2008 – 2012); Attendee, Asia-Pacific Standing Committee Meetings (2011 and 2013); Organizer, Asia-Pacific Sub-regional Women's programs for Australia and New Zealand (2007); Proxy Representative from Asia-Pacific, WSCF Executive Committee Region (2004); Attendee, WSCF General Assembly (2004)

Other Ecumenical Experience: National Coordinator, SCM (2004-2007); Attendee, Australian SCM Annual Conference and Meeting (2002); Member, SCM branch as an undergraduate student (joined in 2002) Member, Local SCM Area Council (2002-2012); Paid Staff Worker, SCM (2003-2004)

National Secretary for the National Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (2008-2009); President, Postgraduate Students' Association of the University of Western Australia Victorian National Council of Churches (Act for Peace); Treasurer, National Council of Churches in Western Australian; National Council of Churches in Australia

Other relevant Experience

Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Resource Economics; Senior Consultant, KPMG; Works closely with WSCF Finance Officer on staff contracts and salaries; Works closely with WSCF Co-General Secretary on financial, personnel, and general WSCF matters.

Interview

Her interview emphasized her awareness of the current state of the federation. Her awareness of this draws on her work for making the salaries of the Regional Secretaries more equitable globally. She has worked closely with WSCF Officers and as a WSCF Officer to address financial and personnel concerns. She draws from her experience as an SCM student in shaping the vision she has for the federation. She couples these experiences with her training in economics to present a forward vision, both financially and operationally, for the WSCF.

HONORARY TREASURER: Candidate

Kokou Hodenou “Felix” Aklavon , SCM-Togo, Africa Region

Vision

- Continue to have the WSCF contribute to the lives of students all over the world through its training mission and spiritual edification coupled with leadership are highly valued as a reference in the ecumenical community around the world
- Open reflections on the particular issue of terrorism that threatens its existence in some remote areas of the world
- Increased Christian-Muslim relations in our universities and schools.
- Provide approach solutions to the many students who lose hope because of the difficulties of life through understanding Christian development and gathering.

As Honorary Treasurer

- An institutional audit to enable us to know the strengths and weaknesses of our common institution
- Develop a strategy for resource mobilization in our approach to project management.
- Review the Ecumenical Assistance Programme (EAP) and see how to improve the use of scarce resources that the organization manages to mobilize
- Seek strategic partnerships to increase and meet the aspirations of many students
- Policy development and recommendation to the Executive Committee

SCM Experience

Treasurer, WSCF Africa Region (2004 – 2006); National President, SCM of Togo (1998 – 2003); General Secretariat, SCM of Togo (1996 – 1998); Deputy General Secretary, SCM of

Togo (1993 – 1996); Local Positions, SCM of Togo (1987 – 1993)

Other Ecumenical Experience: Vice-Chair, West Africa Network on Peace Building

Other Relevant Experience

Master in Business Administration (1998) and Management and Bachelor in Accounting and Management (1997) from University of Lome (Togo); Certificate in Accounting and Management (1994) from the Senior Technical School; Director of Audit and Accountant, MCS (2004 – present); Certified and Chartered Public Accountant (2003 – present); Developed a system for fundraising in the Africa Region; Organized the accounting system of the Africa Regional Office in Nairobi with administrative, accounting and financial policy manual; Research and experience on avoiding fraud; Training and experience in security and conflict.

Interview

His interview emphasized his experience in his region and as an accountant. In his region, he reflected on the work to improve the system and financial situation of the Africa Region's Nairobi office. As an accountant, he reflected on his management of a staff where he works and his experience with personnel and financial management. This experience includes auditing over 200 firms and training in security, conflict, and fraud. Together, he drew on these experiences to create a forward vision for the WSCF.

Appendix 16: Policy paper on Palestine



World Student Christian Federation

A Policy Paper on Palestine

(Approved on March 5, 2015 by the delegates and participants of the WSCF 35th General Assembly held at ACJ/YMCA Bogota Auditorium, Bogota, Colombia.)

For over a century, the World Student Christian Federation has been aspiring to attain social justice and change. The World Student Christian Federation's work manifests throughout the world through their hope for a justice centered future in which human rights are universal.

Overall Position

The basis of The World Student Christian Federation's view on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is based on International Law; Human Rights Law International Humanitarian Law, International Conventions and the call from the Palestinian Kairos Document. Therefore, we seek to restore justice and work for a just and lasting peace in the Holy land.

And thus, we formulate the following positions:

1. We call to end the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and all forms of discrimination; as this occupation is a crime against God and humanity.
2. Jerusalem must be an open and shared city for the two peoples and the three Abrahamic religions.

3. The Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories – including East Jerusalem – are illegal under International Law and must be dismantled.
4. We call to revisit theological positions that support certain unjust political options with regard to the Palestinians; theologies that legitimize the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian land.
5. The Wall constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian territories is a breach of international law and must be dismantled.
6. Palestinians' right of self-determination must be respected, as should be the right of return.
7. Maintaining just peace and a sustainable solution to the conflict is only achieved through peaceful means. Violence cannot be justified whether perpetrated by Israelis or Palestinians.
8. We call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanction of the occupation, as a non-violent tool for justice, peace and security.
9. We call churches and ecumenical organizations worldwide to visit the occupied Palestinian territory in accordance with Kairos Palestine call under "Come and See"
10. We call upon the Regional and National WSCF and SCMs to educate their members on the conflict and be engaged in solidarity activities with the Palestinian people and with justice- building initiatives.

Background Information

In 1948, the State of Israel was announced; on a day that is still commemorated today in Palestinian history as the Nakba (Catastrophe) Day. The process of the creation of a Jewish nation started in the late 1800s. As European societies were becoming more and more anti-Semitic, the First Zionist Congress took place, which resulted in the creation of the Zionist Organization in 1897 and the birth of the idea of a Jewish State. The Zionists realized from their early beginnings that an imperial power's support would be of vital importance. And thus, they reached for the British, who in turn viewed political Zionism favorably. Britain's main role became clear in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, in which Britain announced that "His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object." At that time, Jews made up less than 10% of Palestine's population.

The Jewish immigration rate to Palestine increased rapidly, and by the end of the Second World War there were over half a million Jewish Immigrants living in Palestine. This triggered an uprising of the Arab population, who greatly opposed the immigration of Jews to their lands. By the time Britain had decided to get out of Palestine, the Jews, who already had very effective lobbying groups, particularly in the United States, had 33 nations voting in favor of a Partition of Palestine; a land with a population that was more than two thirds Arab, and of which the Jewish population possessed just over 6%. The Partition Plan handed over 55.5% of Palestine to the proposed Jewish state. Since the Palestinian Arab population would make up more than half the population of the new Jewish state, by the time of the unilateral declaration of Israeli statehood in May 1948, most Zionist leaders were prepared for the forced "transfer" of the Arab population.

Late 1947 and throughout 1948 until early 1949, Palestinian society was dismantled, Palestinian villages and towns were destroyed, more than half of the Palestinian population (an estimated 1.3 million) were displaced by the Zionist militia and the state of Israel. An estimated four in every five Palestinian towns and villages inside Israel were either destroyed or immediately settled by Jews. By May 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed on 78% of the Palestinian land.

During the "Six Day War" in June 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. The UN Security Council passed resolution 242 of 1967, which called for Israel to withdraw from the territories

occupied and acquired by war in that year, and sovereignty and security of all states in the region, but this was not implemented.

Facts on the ground

More than six decades since the Nakba, the Palestinian refugees still lack access to and are denied any durable solution or reparation as per International Law and UN resolutions, including the right of return to their homes of origin. This right is enshrined in UN resolutions, however these resolutions have not been enforced. (Badil, 2010A) By the end of 2008, approximately 67% of the entire Palestinian population worldwide were forcibly displaced persons, including 6.6 million Palestinian refugees and 455,000 internally displaced persons. (Badil, 2008) A third of all Palestinian refugees still live in 58 refugee camps across the Middle East. (UNRWA) The Palestinian refugees are the largest and longest-lasting refugee population in the world. In fact, two out of every five refugees in the world are Palestinian. (Badil, 2010B)

Settlement is illegal under international humanitarian law. IHL states that that an occupying power is not allowed to make permanent changes to the territory it occupies, and according to the 4th Geneva convention, Article 49, "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies". Despite this, Israeli settlements continue to be built and expanded on land confiscated from Palestinians in the West Bank. According to the UNHCR (2013), approximately 250 settlements have been established since 1967 in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with a population of approximately 520'000. The settlement outposts, numbering at approximately 100 in 2012 (B'tselem, 2014), do not have official government recognition, although many of them were established with governmental assistance. The government of Israel fails to evacuate these outposts, most built on private Palestinian land, and instead often provide them with financial support. In a number of cases, these illegal outposts are retroactively legalized (Al Haq, 2013). These settlements are connected by bypass roads. Since 1967, Israel has cleared and paved hundreds of kilometers of bypass roads, which are for the sole use of Israelis. These roads isolate and separate communities. (Peace Now, 2005) Settlers often harass and attack Palestinians and their property. The Israeli settlers' attacks on Palestinians and their property are disregarded by the IOF; in fact many attacks are carried out with their protection. These attacks include attacks on land and trees, assault of people, attacks on cars and houses, attacks on religious and historic sites, and settlement expansion. (Arij, 2013). The Israeli Government decided to construct a wall in 2002, with the declared aim of preventing terrorist attacks by Palestinian militants. (OCHAOPT) However, 85% is located within the West Bank, to the east of the internationally-recognized Green Line (Richard Falk, 2014), demonstrating that the Wall is a part of the system of physical and administrative barriers aimed at restricting Palestinian movement and access to services and resources throughout the West Bank (OCHAOPT). In some areas, the Apartheid Wall consists of a concrete mass, ranging to a height of between 8 and 12 meters, with armed sniper towers, electrified fences, 30-100 meter buffer zones, razor wire, military patrols and military roads. Where the buffer zones exist, the road is paved for large-scale demolitions and expulsion of local Palestinian residents. (Stop the Wall, 2011) When the Apartheid Wall is completed, it is expected to run for 708km, effectively cutting off and isolating 9.4% of the West Bank territory. (Richard Falk, 2014) In 2004, the International Court of Justice ruled that the Apartheid Wall is illegal under International law, and Israel is obliged to stop the Wall's construction and dismantle what has been built already. (ICJ, 2004)

There are a multitude of Israeli checkpoints across the West Bank, along with road blocks and gates on the separation barrier, all of which restrict the free movement of the Palestinians. In February 2014 there were 99 fixed checkpoints in the West Bank: 59 are internal checkpoints, located well within the West Bank. (B'tselem, 2014) At the close of 2012, OCHA counted approximately 532 road blocks a month. These

checkpoints may be closed at any time without prior notice, which prevents Palestinians from reaching workplaces, health facilities, schools, and so on. (B'tselem, 2007)

Over a fifth of the Palestinian population live in Poverty. Poverty in Gaza is twice as high as in the West Bank, at a rate of 33.7% in 2009. (World Bank, 2011). Not only does Israel control the crossings between Gaza Strip and the West Bank, but also it fully controls Gaza's air space and territorial waters. Movement in and out of Gaza, whether of people or goods, to the west bank or internationally, is virtually impossible. There are also restrictions on international trade. All of this contributes to the distortion of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territories, giving rise to high levels of poverty and unemployment, deep recession and decreased standard of living. (World Bank, 2011). Unemployment in Gaza was as high as 38% in 2010, with Youth unemployment higher, at 53.3%. (World Bank, 2011) Gaza's economy is also effected by numerous military operations that target civilians and their property. Israel launched Operation Cast Lead in 2008. 1,400 Palestinians were killed, including 300 children, and thousands were left homeless. (Amnesty International) Israel extensively targeted the infrastructure and residences. The economy, which was already in recession, was decimated (Amnesty International). On the 14th of November, 2012 Israel launched Operation Pillar of Defense, in which 167 Palestinian were killed, 31 of whom were children. (Amnesty International, 2013)

Palestinians can be held by the Israeli military under administrative detention: a term used to justify keeping a Palestinian prisoner indefinitely, without charging them, giving them a fair trial, or even informing them of the suspicions against them. (Addameer, 2011A) While it is prohibited by International Law, the policy of administrative detention is used extensively, becoming more frequent after the second intifada. (Addameer, 2011B) Since 1967, over 750,000 Palestinians have been detained by Israel, which is roughly 20% of the Palestinian population (Richard Falk, 2013) Some 7,500 Palestinian children have been detained by Israeli occupation forces since the year 2000, according to DCI. Israel is the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes children in military courts. (DCI, 2013) Torture is being used, on children and adults, in jails and during interrogations. That includes: physical violence, verbal abuse, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, threat to harm family members and tying in painful positions. (Addameer, 2011C)

Although several attempts were made to revive the Peace Process, which began in the early 1990's, none have succeeded to bring peace with justice to the region. This is caused by an unwillingness compromise on certain key issues, such as the status of Jerusalem, refugees, and settlements. In the case of the final status negotiations between 31/07/13 and 29/5/14, a freeze of settlement activity was agreed for the negotiations to transpire. However, these activities continued, for example, Israel approved the building of an estimated 17,388 units in 37 Israeli settlements in the West Bank in this period. (Poica, 2014)

Kairos Palestine

Witnessing the transformation of the Word of God into dead letters; used to deprive the Palestinians of their own land and rights, also witnessing the calls for violence and holy wars against them in the name of God, the Palestinian Christians raised their voice from within the sufferings: A cry of faith, hope and love. In the Palestinian Kairos document, the Palestinians address all the churches and Christians across the world requesting them to stand against apartheid and injustice, calling them to turn away from the theologies that justify the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian land. Furthermore, the document calls on political leaders and decision makers and all peoples to take legal measures against Israel until it complies with international law: ends its occupation of the Palestinian land and ends all forms of discrimination, oppression and apartheid. It also emphasizes the vital role of nonviolent resistance of the occupation, a creative resistance with love as its logic; not resisting with death but with the ultimate respect of life, a resistance

that is not a tool of revenge, but a means that ends the existing evil; liberating not only the victims of injustice but also the perpetrators as well.

Terminology

Occupied Palestinian Territory: The term used by the United Nations and the International Court of Justice to refer to the *West Bank*, *Gaza Strip* and *East Jerusalem*: the territories conquered by Israel in 1967.

East Jerusalem: Israel has unilaterally expanded the municipal boundaries of the city and illegally annexed East Jerusalem, in 1967.

Gaza Strip: A territory of 360 square kilometers that is home for around 1.5 million Palestinians, considered part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Green Line: it marks the division between the territories militarily occupied by Israel since 1967 and the territories recognized as Israel proper. It was set out by the Armistice Agreements, 1949, between Israel and the neighbouring countries.

Nakba: The Arabic word for Catastrophe. It refers to the ethnic cleansing and dispossession of the Palestinians by Israel in 1948.

The Peace Process: initially referred to the official negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian political leaders since the early 1990s. Now, it expands to describe the ongoing international diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict.

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Appendix 17: Report on Identity, Diversity and Dialogue

Report and Recommendations of the Task Group on Identity, Diversity and Dialogue to the WSCF General Assembly in Colombia, August 2014

Our Process

The 2008 General Assembly and the Executive Committee recognised the need for the topic of sexuality and gender identity to be discussed. At the global level, a task group was formed to explore identity, diversity, and dialogue in the context of this specific issue. The task group met in Geneva, Switzerland 15-21 June 2014 to hold a discussion and bring forward a recommendation to the General Assembly to be held in Colombia in August 2014. The meeting included discussion in both small groups and in plenary, lectures from experts, and individual reflection. Through these methodologies, the task group explored such topics as the identity of the WSCF, the secular discourse around human rights and its application to our faithful search for justice, the concept of “the other,” our personal experiences and an exchange of our contexts, theological and Biblical analysis, and the individual and collective consideration of possible recommendations to present to the General Assembly in Colombia.

The group worked together to summarise the nature, process, findings, challenges, and recommendations that emerged from the meeting. The result is this document. We hope that this document is not the end of the process, but an invitation to continue: it is a resource to guide the GA in its decision-making.

We lament that the Africa Region was not able to be represented in this meeting, as a result of visa issues. The task group had previously received a preparatory document from one African participant, although it did not address all of the questions. The task group read and considered this document, understanding that it was meant to be an individual input to the group from his personal perspective. The task group found this document helpful to better understand the broad diversity of views within the WSCF.

WSCF Identity

The WSCF has an ecumenical identity. This means that it brings together numerous movements from various countries, cultures, and traditions of the Christian faith. Through the WSCF, therefore, many

people with different ways of thinking, feeling, and experiences of the world share a common life, including in many movements people who are marginalised because of their sexuality and gender identity.

The WSCF exists to accompany the SCMs in their contexts and struggles. In the presence of the cloud of witnesses that have emerged from the WSCF over the past century, we cannot hold in silence the crisis of conscience that now faces the global and local Christian community around the inability to effectively address differences of perspective on this topic and relate to the people especially affected. The WSCF remains committed to pursuing unity and the realisation of the Body of Christ now as throughout its history.

The WSCF has a prophetic, Christian identity. This means that we are called to advocate for justice, liberation, and peace. Continuing dialogue about sexual and gender diversity affirms our commitment to our own identity.

Terminology and Approach

Finding appropriate language to use throughout this discussion has been a challenge. Part of this is because there are not universally understood terms to capture all of the sexual and gender identities people experience. We have also been making the attempt to use accessible language which allows all people to participate in this conversation. When this task group was formed, the language used was LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*), however in the process of learning together we found that these Western concepts did not capture the many other culturally specific identities and experiences.

In this report and set of recommendations, we have chosen to use the terms “people who are being marginalised based on their sexual or gender identity” and “diverse sexual and gender identities”. This includes, but is not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, intersex, asexual, queer, etc. We recognise that these terms are still limiting and insufficient and that we will need to engage in further dialogue on the issue of language and inclusivity.

Throughout the week, we have had ongoing discussions about human rights, civil rights, and justice approaches to work for the dignity, safety, and equality of people being marginalised based on their sexual or gender identity. We have explored their benefits and limitations. As a Christian organisation, we have found it important to explore deeply why we believe a situation is just or unjust. This exploration has involved biblical reflection, theological engagement, and learning from each other’s experiences. We have not come to conclusions on the best approach or approaches, and we recognise the need for further engagement on this issue.

Contributions on Theology, Identities and Community

The group received inputs and shared some theological reflection on the Trinity, to explore the relationships between the individual and the community. Some key points for the group were:

- Every person equally bears the image of God. As every human bears the imprint of God, we have no option but to affirm the dignity of all people.
- The very nature of God is community through the Trinity. Part of the nature of the Trinity is interrelatedness, as the parts of the Trinity correlate and dialogue with each other. This applies to us too: when in dialogue with each other, there is always a third person present:

God. It is good to remind ourselves that we are not alone when we are reflecting on these issues.

- We have to address dualism, as it is in opposition to dialogue and diversity. Dualism means to divide things into binary opposites: body vs soul. This dualist view has led to the demonization of the body and spiritualization of the soul, and to the idea that sexuality is sinful. This has implications for how we view each other. Since Christianity is Word becoming flesh, then the body and spirit are not separate from each other.

The group also received inputs and discussion around sexuality and gender in different global contexts. Some key points that the group considered are:

- Lesbian, gay and bisexual identities are considered by many to be class related (middle-upper class) or Western. These are often not conceptions coming from people living in poverty or from indigenous groups or communities. „Queer“ is often considered too American (US) in Latin America.
- In some cultures, Transgender people are the spiritual leaders of the community, which is hard for some of us to understand.
- Some cultures and sectors of the population in any country have their own identities and do not want to use lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, because they are alien identities and they cannot identify with them.
- In some places it is dangerous to adopt lesbian, gay, bisexual or any other sexual identities due to very high risk of attack/expulsion from home and/or community: people have been murdered for taking up these identities and claiming rights for themselves or others.

Our Challenge

1. The Federation is founded on diversity, both ecumenical and cultural, so it is natural that we hold different approaches to sexuality and gender identity, as we do with many other issues. In regard to this topic, the differences include strong and painful disagreements. The Task Group believes that we can successfully address and even celebrate this diversity without losing our unity in Christ. The group learnt that:
 - a) Movements" perspectives are based on theology, the Bible, church tradition, and/or society.
 - b) Sexuality and gender identity have been interpreted differently in across cultures and history.
 - c) We have a history of grappling with diversity. This is a gift which can help us grapple with our current questions.
2. There are regions and movements that are not comfortable beginning a dialogue at this time, because of the culture, history, faith, laws and/or political developments in their contexts. The group identified the following:

- a) Power dynamics affect our conversation: this includes colonialism, the different power structures in our churches, the relationship between our churches and the state, and between our SCMs and the churches.
 - b) There are fears and misunderstandings on both sides, which arise from not knowing each other.
 - c) Points of difference arise about the relationship between sexuality and gender diversity and sin, family, human nature in the image of God, and the interpretation of the Bible.
3. The Federation also needs more dialogue before it is able to speak with one voice and make any global statement on sexuality and gender diversity. The group would like to share that one of the most difficult areas of discussion was around the ability of the WSCF to take a public stand in various ways for the rights of people marginalised by their sexual or gender identity.
- a) Some group members raised the following recommendations and the group would like to share the deep calling some of the members have to:

Show solidarity with people marginalised on the basis of their gender or sexual identity and take action against discrimination, violence and criminalisation. Advocate for basic human rights for people marginalised on the basis of gender or sexual identities such as the right to life (not to be killed) to freedom from violence, to shelter/housing, health, education, and livelihood, in the churches and in society. The hope was raised that the Federation could do this on a global level, e.g. at the UN.
 - b) For others in the group, it is impossible to agree at this time that the Federation should take any public action on these topics due to a complex cluster of faith, ecclesiological, and political reasons.
 - c) All in the group affirm personally that any violence against anyone is unacceptable, and that we will begin by addressing this issue internally. Others in the group are perplexed and pained that, this being the case, we cannot simply begin by stating this. All in the group, however, are grateful that deeper understanding between us has already begun and wishes this for the entire Federation.
 - d) We continue to affirm the ability of national movements and regions to work on sexuality and gender diversity, and to advocate on behalf of people marginalised because of their sexual or gender identity.
 - e) We understand the disagreement on advocacy and to be able to come to a Federation position about it, more dialogue is needed, and is therefore recommended by this group.

As the General Assembly gathers on the theme of unity, diversity and mission for God's Reign, we hope that the fruits of our dialogue will help you to reach the best decision for the way forward.

We are many. We are one. We are sent out to build God's peace.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Federation is founded on unity in diversity. We experience that our churches and communities, including our SCMs, around the world are divided in their responses to sexuality and gender diversity. In this situation, the failure to dialogue and listen to one another is causing pain on all sides, but we also have resources to learn from our diversity and grow in unity.

Therefore we affirm the value of and need for dialogue on sexuality and gender diversity and **our major recommendation is that the Federation intentionally continue and deepen this dialogue.**

To this end, we recommend that

1. The same IDD Task Group be mandated by the General Assembly to continue as a working group until the next GA in order to further and support this dialogue.
2. All levels of the Federation commit to engage in this process.
3. Members of WSCF meet at regional and global levels for dialogue on this topic.
4. National movements discuss and decide what approach is appropriate for them in their own contexts and at the same time commit to the Federation process of dialogue.
5. The Federation base this process of dialogue in the deeper work of discerning anew our identity, mission and vision-- "examining who we are" by creating clearer conceptual links between our core mandate and our local, national, regional, and global work.
6. WSCF use the following to ensure a fruitful dialogue:
 - a) Academic study
 - b) Bible study
 - c) Exploring the language we use to be sensitive and inclusive
 - d) Explore the power imbalances within the Federation and intersections with marginalisation on the basis of gender or sexual identities.
7. The WSCF source, create and widely share resources to increase our understanding of sexuality and gender diversity. This can include:
 - a) Sharing personal stories and testimonies about diverse sexuality and gender identities in order to dispel myths and misconceptions on all sides.
 - b) Sharing theological perspectives and bible studies/reflections
 - c) Training in dialogue skills
 - d) Information on discrimination based on sexual and gender identities (especially language and terminology in different contexts)
 - e) Ethics, morality, philosophy, justice theory
 - f) Contact to resource people and organisations that can offer expertise

g) National movements and regions who are working on sexuality and gender diversity be called upon as a resource for this topic throughout the Federation.

8. All levels of the Federation ensure that people of all sexualities and gender identities are free from violence within our community life and commit to creating safe(r) spaces for people of all sexualities and gender identities.
9. WSCF begin a programme of prayer that calls on the Federation around the world to ask for wisdom, unity, and justice in our approach to and dialogue about sexuality.
10. The Federation communicate externally that we are engaged in such a process and offer learning along the way as a resource and model for others facing similar disagreement and conflict.

Appendix 18: List of Participants

Designation	First Name	Family Name	Email
IRO	Christine	Housel	Christine.Housel@wscf.ch
IRO	Jean-Luc	de la Soujeole	Jean-luc.delasoujeole@wscf.ch
RS STAFF	Amos Kamugisha	Mushendwa	akmushendwa@gmail.com; wscf@wscf-africa.org
RS STAFF	Sunita Sumati	Suna	sunita.wscf@gmail.com; wscfap@netvigator.com
RS STAFF	Natia	Tsintsadze	wscf@wscf-europe.org
RS STAFF	Marcelo	Leites	marcellitu@gmail.com; fumecc@fumecc-alc.org
RS STAFF	Elsy	Wakil	wakilelsy@hotmail.com; wscf-me@inco.com.lb
RS STAFF	Luciano	Kovacs	wscfna@gmail.com
EXCO	Horacio	Mesones	mesones@creas.org
EXCO	Bronwyn	Claire	drbronwynclaire@gmail.com
EXCO	Shantha Ready	Alonso	shantha.ready@gmail.com; sready@networklobby.org
EXCO	Youhanna	Kamal Shawky	youhanna_k@hotmail.com; youhanna_k@yahoo.com
EXCO	Isatu	Ville	villeisatu13@yahoo.com; villeisatu13@gmail.com; nscs_scmliberia@yahoo.com
EXCO	Paul Martin	Nguimgo	nguimgom@yahoo.fr; mepc.cameroun@yahoo.fr
EXCO	Hiu Fan	Chung	kscf@chol.com ; fanlam316@gmail.com
EXCO	Immanuel	Gopalakitnan	kit_immanuel@yahoo.com; immanuelkitnan@gmail.com
EXCO	Annika	Foltin	annika.foltin@web.de; eventscoord1@wscf-europe.org
EXCO	Marco Alfredo	Fornerone	exco2@wscf-europe.org
EXCO	Dianet de la Caridad	Martínez Valdés	mecdecuba@enet.cu
EXCO	Oscar Eduardo	Reicher Salazar	oreicher@hotmail.com
EXCO	Marianne Amir Rofael	Azer	marzer@yahoo.com
EXCO	Dany	El-Obeid	delobeid@gmail.com
EXCO	Youssef Zaky	Wahib Zaky	ywahib@Mobinil.com
EXCO	Cydney	Proctor	cydney.proctor@gmail.com
EXCO	Logan	Boese	lboese@gustavus.edu
DELEGATES	Mawuna Ghislaine Jacqueline	Madjro	jmadjro@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Jean-Marie	Nzambimana	nzambimanaj@ymail.com
DELEGATES	Nadeige	Shimba Kilongo	nadeigeshimba2@gmail.com; ajec1@hotmail.com
DELEGATES	Akissi Ninon Claire	Konan	konaakissi@yahoo.fr ; ben.aceepci@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Fekadu	Genala	fekadubg@gmail.com; fekadub@eecomy.ethionet.et
DELEGATES	Mengistu	Bedassa	mengaw2005@yahoo.com
DELEGATES	Akua Bema	Adomako	ghana_scm@yahoo.com
DELEGATES	Kevin Kimani	Kahuro	kevinkimani76@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Thora Rodrigue	Mohau	mohaudrique@gmail.com; mohauodrique@gmail.com; scmlesotho@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Miezaka Andriamalagasy	Razafindralambo	miezakar@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Christopher Gervas	Chimangeni	achimangeni@yahoo.co.uk;

			christianyouthmw1@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Shali Dama Omwene	Kapepo	sdokapepo@gmail.com; scmofnamibia@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Timothy Opeyemi (replacing Harold)	Oyeyinka	toyeyinka@yahoo.com; pastor@anointedchapel.org; scmnig2011@yahoo.com
DELEGATES	Yvette	Mukagaju Izabayo	yvettegaju@yahoo.fr
DELEGATES	Jean Pierre	Habimana	habipi05@yahoo.fr; kingdomproductioncenter@yahoo.com
DELEGATES	Aluel Jervase Manyuat	Adiang	aluel3@yahoo.com; nkayanga.nelson@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Naomi	John Rushima	naomijohnsdaughter05@gmail.com; youth@cct-tz.org
DELEGATES	Kodjo Mawuli	Aklavo	akladane84@yahoo.fr; acetogo@yahoo.fr
DELEGATES	Pamella	Nuwarinda	pnuwarinda@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Sharon Moola	Mushokabanji	moolamie@gmail.com; gilbert@mocat.zm
DELEGATES	Adam	Van	adamegeddon@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Edward Tarun	Roy (Marvin Gomez)	ctimpex@hotmail.com ; edward@ctimpex.com
DELEGATES	Ham	Kimhoun	ParableCambodia@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Chien Loke	Wong	bernard1992@yahoo.com.hk; bernard1992@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Inbaraj Jeyakumar	Vedanayagam	inbarajjeyakumar@gmail.com; fellowshipscmi@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Adolfín Deslina	Datang	desy_datang@yahoo.co.id ; ppgmki@yahoo.co.id
DELEGATES	YeoJin	Song	applemint473@daum.net
DELEGATES	Ming Ern (Ernest)	Lee	ernest2390@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Tun Tun	Oo	saihti@gmail.com; scmmyanmar@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Ajit Kumar	Tamang	gole_ajit38@yahoo.com
DELEGATES	Scott Michael	McSorley	scott.mcsorley@hotmail.com ; natsec@scm.org.nz
DELEGATES	Milka	Hanook	milka.hanook@gmail.com; scmpakistan@hotmail.com
DELEGATES	Einstein Zapata	Recedes	scmp.national@gmail.com ; enteng.itneg@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Kahagallalage Saman	Jaya-suriya (Tharaka)	shalomesj@gmail.com; scmsl@sltnet.lk
DELEGATES	Yi-Lin (Irene)	Wu	irenewu0710@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Antonio Bernardo Scheunemann	Da Silva	iculay_uns2010@hotmail.com; scm_easttimor@yahoo.com
DELEGATES	Krista Henrika	Autio	krista.autio@helsinki.fi
DELEGATES	Valentin	Tranchand	Valentin.Tranchand@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Annette (Maria)	Klinke (Esfandiari)	esg@bundes-esg.de
DELEGATES	Rachel	Power	rachel_power11@yahoo.ie; powerr1@tcd.ie
DELEGATES	Lina	Leonaviciute	l.e.leonaviciute@gmail.com; lina.l@grida.lt
DELEGATES	Tonje Catharina	Eide	toramonsrud@gmail.com; tora@forbundet.no
DELEGATES	Audun	Stranden	n/a
DELEGATES	Marta	Calpińska	marta.calpinska@wp.pl ; bractwo_zc@poczta.onet.pl
DELEGATES	Petru-Lucian	Cîrlan	cirlan.lucian@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Zuzana	Babicova	n/a
DELEGATES	Are	Kaspersen	kaspersen.are@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Clare	Wilkins	clarewilkins@gmail.com
DELEGATES	María Gloria	Alman Bornes	mg.almanb@gmail.com; secretaria@faie.org.ar ; floresta@menonitas.org.ar
DELEGATES	Teodocia	Flores Otoyá	aleflor_193@hotmail.com; ielb@ielbbolivia.org.bo
DELEGATES	Edoarda	Sopelsa Scherer	duda7_scherer@hotmail.com
DELEGATES	Johana	Nuñez	jackilla83@gmail.com; jaquelin.smith@sutherlandglobal.com
DELEGATES	Alexander	Mulet De Los Reyes	alexander.mulet@fie.uo.edu.cu

DELEGATES	Marco Giovanni	Panchi Jima	marco.gpj@gmail.com; cepaj2013@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Karina Martha Mireya	García Carmona	tob_isha@hotmail.com; ckarmona@semmla.org
DELEGATES	Kathia	Alba	n/a
DELEGATES	Ramy Farouk	Hanna	ramyfms@hotmail.com; ramy.farouk@mcv-eg.com
DELEGATES	Maria Yousry	Makary Gabra Isaac	Marmora_elamoura@hotmail.com
DELEGATES	Sherry Samuel	Botros Kaliney	sherrybotros@yahoo.com; ssamuel@copticorphans.org
DELEGATES	Peter Amir Ibrahim	Abdo	peteramiribro@hotmail.com
DELEGATES	Fadi Ghaith Fathullah	Al-Ajdh	tech_dr_fady@yahoo.com; eyci_coordinators@yahoo.com
DELEGATES	Hind	Farahat	hindfarahat@yahoo.com; hindfarahat@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Charbel	El Saykali	bouli_221@hotmail.com
DELEGATES	Alexandre	Roumi	alexandre_roumi@hotmail.com
DELEGATES	Guitta	Kahaleh	guittakahaleh@hotmail.com
DELEGATES	Nare	Saghdejian	nare92@live.com; museum@armenianorthodoxchurch.org
DELEGATES	Bayan Issam Hanna	Barham	bayan_barham@hotmail.com
DELEGATES	Mina Gerges	Adli Fakhouri	mina_gaf@live.com ; mina.gaf.d@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Sonia	Almassad	soniamas3ad@hotmail.com; smasaad@iom.int
DELEGATES	Brandi Jenessa Dawn	Friesen	brandij.thorpe@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Carter	Habeeb	carterhabeeb@gmail.com
DELEGATES	Louis	Tillman	ltillman@lstc.edu; lrt4327@gmail.com
SEARCH CTTE	Ting Jin	Yong	wscfsc2014@yahoo.com; wscfsc2014@gmail.com
SEARCH CTTE	Florence	Kanyike	flokany02@gmail.com
SEARCH CTTE	Yarkus	Perez	yarkus@gmail.com
CANDIDATES	Kokou Hodenou (Félix)	Aklavon	aklafelix@yahoo.fr; cabinetmcs@yahoo.fr
CANDIDATES	Masimba Lovemore	Kuchera	masimba_zw2001@hotmail.com
CANDIDATES	Jurgette Nectarinia	Montes Rocas	nectamontes@yahoo.com
SENIOR FRIENDS	David Anirudha	Das	daviddas1824@yahoo.com; nccb@bangla.net
SENIOR FRIENDS	David Raton	Halder	hr_david@hotmail.com; david.halder@dnsourcingbd.com
SENIOR FRIENDS	Richmond	Milton	milton.richmond@gmail.com, Richmond.milton@rezagroup-bd.com
SENIOR FRIENDS	William Salters	Sterling	m.hanna@ucc.ie
SENIOR FRIENDS	Micheal Victor	Hanna	m.hanna@ucc.ie; michael.hanna4@gmail.com
SENIOR FRIENDS	Markus Ilari	Rantakari	ilari.rantakari@kolumbus.fi; ilari.rantakari@gmail.com
SENIOR FRIENDS	Gabriela	Miranda Garcia	gmirandagarcia@yahoo.es
SENIOR FRIENDS	Jorge	Domingues	jdomingu@gbgm-umc.org
SENIOR FRIENDS	Elizabeth Muriel Findlay	Anderson	andersonbetsy528@gmail.com
SENIOR FRIENDS	William Mead	Muhler	william.muhler@comcast.net
SENIOR FRIENDS	Kenneth	Guest	kenguest@earthlink.net
RESOURCE PEOPLE	George	Mathew	gcoorilos@gmail.com
RESOURCE PEOPLE	Michael	Garcia	mikegarcia2007@gmail.com
RESOURCE PEOPLE	Johnston	McMaster	jontymac15@gmail.com; mcmastj@tcd.ie
RESOURCE PEOPLE	Carolyn Heather	Williams	carolynhw27@yahoo.co.uk
RESOURCE PEOPLE	Analia	Kim	analia@creas.org
RESOURCE PEOPLE	Humberto	Shikiya	humberto@creas.org

PEOPLE			
RESOURCE PEOPLE	Marcelo	Schneider	Marcelo.schneider@wcc-coe.org
RESOURCE PEOPLE	Rogelio Dario	Barolin	dariobarolin@yahoo.com.ar
RESOURCE PEOPLE	Don	Reasoner	dreasone@gbgm-umc.org
PARTNER	Dr. Fulata Lusungu	Moyo	fulamoyo0@gmail.com; Fulata.Mbano_Moyo@wcc-coe.org
PARTNER	Isaiah Kipyegon	Toroitich	Isaiah.Toroitich@actalliance.org
PARTNER	Peter	Prove	Peter.Prove@wcc-coe.org
PARTNER	Dinesh	Suna	Dinesh.Suna@wcc-coe.org
PARTNER	Rev. Peniel Jesudason Rufus	Rajkumar	peniel.rajkumar@wcc-coe.org
PARTNER	Martina Viktorie	Kopecká	martina.viktorie@gmail.com; martina.kopecka@ccsh.cz
PARTNER	Tyler Dale	Hauger	tyler@karibu.no; rostrup@karibu.no
PARTNER	Ana Veronica	Flachier Ludeña	anaveronicaflachier@gmail.com
PARTNER	Paul St Patrick Anthony	Gardner	pstpatrickanthony@yahoo.com; moravianchurchja@yahoo.com
PARTNER	Joy Eva	Bohol	jbohol@umcmision.org
PARTNER	Jenny	Neme	jennyneme@gmail.com
PARTNER	Deivit Andres	Montealegre Cuenca	montealegre@globethics.net
PARTNER	Rudelmar	Bueno de Faria	rdf@wcc-coe.org; rudelmar@bluewin.ch
PARTNER	Rev. Dr. Shanta	Premawardhana	shanta@scupe.com
PARTNER	Rev. Edward	Pratt	prattes@hotmail.com
PARTNER	Rev. LeKisha	Reed	LReed@umcmision.org
PARTNER	Lorenzo	Vargas	LV@waccglobal.org
PARTNER	Amy Blythe	Crawford	acrawfor@united-church.ca
PARTNER	Rev.Chris	Ferguson	cf@wrc.eu
COLOMBIA RE-SOURCE PEOPLE	Milton	Mejia	miltonmej@gmail.com
COLOMBIA RE-SOURCE PEOPLE	Maricel	Mena	maricelmena@usantotomas.edu.co
COLOMBIA RE-SOURCE PEOPLE	Abilio	Pena	abiliopena@justiciapazcolombia.com>
COLOMBIA RE-SOURCE PEOPLE	Eleazar	Torreglosa	eleazarmusic47@hotmail.com
COLOMBIAN GUESTS	Diego	Higuita	dhiguita@ipcol.org
COLOMBIAN GUESTS	Milciades	Pua	mipuamez@gmail.com
COLOMBIAN GUESTS	Javier	Rodriguez	dirgeneral@colamericano.edu.co
COLOMBIAN GUESTS	Gloria	Ullua	atilio@koinonia.org.br
COLOMBIAN GUESTS	Eduardo	Martinez	presidencia@ielco.org
COLOMBIAN GUESTS	Erik	Norman	
COLOMBIAN GUESTS	Saara	Vuorensola-Barnes	rep.col@lwdws.org
LAC GUESTS	Sarahí	García Gómez	asemec@enet.cu
LAC GUESTS	Felipe	Adolf	felipeadolfc@gmail.com
LAC GUESTS	Carlos	Tamez	tamezpoblacion.desarrollo@gmail.com

Appendix 19: Message from the 35th General Assembly of WSCF



World Student Christian Federation

The 35th General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation meeting in Bogotá, Colombia, from the 27th February to the 5th March 2015 records its profound gratitude to the Colombian churches and ecumenical organizations, the Colombian government, and the People of Colombia for the exceedingly warm welcome which we have been accorded.

The Assembly was made up of 78 delegates from 64 countries as well as Senior Friends of the WSCF and representatives from the World Council of Churches, ACT Alliance, WACC, WCRC, Global Christian Forum, Globethics, SCUPE, The Methodist Church General Board of Global Ministries, United Church of Canada, Karibu, and the WSCF Centennial Fund, US Trustees, and WSCF Canada. Students, Senior Friends, and Partners – Colombian and international – served as resource persons for our panel discussions and workshops. The following 8 movements were affiliated into the WSCF through a unanimous vote by the 2015 General Assembly: Student Christian Movement Ireland (ISCM), Youth Diocese Church from Lebanon, Palestine Youth Ecumenical Movement (PYEM), Fellowship of Orthodox Youth in Poland, SCM-USA, Christian Youth Association of Malawi (CYAMA), Centra Ecumenica from Belarus, Young Christians for Peace and Democracy (YCPD) from Georgia.

The Assembly passed an historic Palestine Policy Paper, from which deepened work for justice in Palestine will be launched. There was also an agreement to continue dialogue about human sexuality and a Task Group mandated to lead the efforts.

The theme of our Assembly was *We are Many, We are One – Sent to Build God's Peace*. Through daily worship of praise and prayer and through daily Bible study, we have sought to understand where in our world today the reign of the God of Justice and Peace and Love is coming into being. In these days of violence, militarization, and war, the WSCF highlighted through this Assembly our commitment to mobilizing students around the world to a vocation of peace. It is never easy when people of different countries, different genders, different religious traditions, different political, economic and social perspectives come together to learn with and from each other, and that has been true for our Assembly.

Through our visits to educational institutions, community projects and the Memory, Peace and Reconciliation Centre in Bogotá and also through the visits to the Assembly of victims of the conflict and people working in Colombian communities for peace, we have heard and been able to support the work of

Justice and Peace in Colombia. These engagements have demonstrated in action what we learned of in our keynote address, how there can be no peace without justice.

Our Federation has had to face a significant shortfall in annual income just at the moment when all ecumenical agencies are facing a reduction in the funds available to them. We have struggled to understand what is the best way forward for our organization, founded in 1895. We know that there is a massive task to be undertaken.

With this realization, the *Future of the Federation* was a major focus for this General Assembly. Our panel speakers on the theme *Contribution to Change* left us in no doubt that there is a major task for the Federation to undertake in every continent of the world. We cannot do it on our own and partnership in and with churches and all agencies who share a call to work for Justice and Peace is the only way forward. It is the intention of the World Student Christian Federation so to do as we move to implement the program of changes recommended by the Future of the Federation Report as adopted by the General Assembly.

One of the changes recommended, and adopted, by the Future of the Federation Task Group Report was the suspension of the position of General Secretary for a 6-9 month transition period, during which time an Interim Transition Coordinator would work with a Transition Team appointed by the Executive Committee to examine needed changes in the WSCF's structure, governance, and functioning. Former Asia Pacific Regional Secretary Ms Necta Montes of the Philippines has been chosen in the Coordinator role. The officers elected by the Assembly are Mr Immanuel Kitnan of Sri Lanka as Student Vice-Chair and Ms Bronwyn Claire of Australia as Honorary Treasurer. As no Chairperson or Female Vice-Chair was elected, a search process will follow in the coming months and former Africa Regional Secretary Ms Georgine Kengne Djeutane of Cameroon was appointed by the Executive Committee in a meeting following the Assembly as Acting Chair. Also appointed by the Executive Committee, the Transition Team will be composed of Senior Friends Rev Christopher Ferguson (Canada) and Mr Salters Sterling (Ireland), who also sits on the Centennial Fund Board of Trustees; Students Rev Marco Fornerone (Italy) and Pretty Mubaiwa (Zimbabwe); and the Acting Chair and Treasurer of WSCF.

As we begin to take the first steps of this moment of transition we repeat our greetings and our gratitude to the citizens of Bogotá and the people of Colombia and we ask God's blessing on all the students, staff, Senior Friends, and partners as we continue the journey.

The WSCF Executive Committee

Ms Georgine Kengne Djeutane, Acting Chairperson

Mr Immanuel Gopala Kitnan, Vice-Chairperson

Ms Bronwyn Claire, Honorary Treasurer

Mrs Lydia Nabunya, Africa Region Representative

Mr Paul Martin Nguimgo, Africa Region Representative

Ms Brandi Friesen Thorpe, North America Region Representative

Minister Louis Tillman, North America Region Representative

Ms Chung Hiu Fan, Asia-Pacific Region Representative

Mr John Graveston, Asia-Pacific Region Representative Ms Annika Foltin, Europe Region Representative Valentin Tranchand, Europe Region Representative

Ms Dianet de la Caridad Martinez Valdés, Latin America & Caribbean Region Representative

Mr Oscar Eduardo Reicher Salazar, Latin America & Caribbean Region Representative

Ms Marianne Azer, Middle East Region Representative Dr Dany El Obeid, Middle East Region Representative Rev Amos Mushendwa, Africa Regional Secretary

Mr Luciano Kovacs, North America Regional Secretary

Ms Sunita Suna, Asia Pacific Regional Secretary

Ms Natia Tsintsadze, Europe Regional Secretary

Mr Marcelo Leites, Latin America and Caribbean Regional Secretary

Ms Elsy Wakil, Middle East Regional Secretary

Ms Necta Montes, Interim Coordinator

25 March 2015