



A GUIDE TO
ACT
DEVELOPMENT

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A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

For the past year, the World Council of Churches has been leading a process to strengthen cooperation within the ecumenical family around development issues. The scandal of poverty requires coordinated ecumenical action. The gap between those with resources and power and those without continues to grow. Environmental problems - global warming, depletion of natural resources and loss of biodiversity -- loom ever larger. While Action by Churches Together (ACT International) works to coordinate ecumenical work in emergency relief, there is no similar mechanism for collaboration once the immediate emergency is over.

Churches and church-related organizations make up one of the largest global networks working to eradicate poverty and strengthen local communities and yet there has not been an adequate mechanism for them to work together. Moreover, the context for development work has changed. In all regions, the proliferation of non-governmental organizations has meant that churches and their related organizations face increasingly competitive environments.

ACT Development seeks to respond to the changing context by enhancing collaboration and mutual accountability between churches and church-related organizations who are working in the field of development and by increasing the visibility of ecumenical work. In particular, ACT Development will work closely with the WCC, ACT International and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance towards the goal of bringing together ecumenical work with emergencies, advocacy and development under a common umbrella with a common name. Wherever possible, ACT Development will work with and through existing ecumenical instruments and organisations rather than create new infrastructure.

ACT Development is not for all WCC member churches. Rather it is a very specific instrument to enable those churches with specialized departments working in the field of development and ecumenical agencies, in the North, South and East to strengthen their collaboration with each other in order to increase the effectiveness of their efforts with the poor and marginalized. This is a laudable goal. I see this very much in the framework of the Common Understanding and Vision policy through which WCC is facilitating a process by which members of the ecumenical family are developing ways to strengthen their relationships with each other in order to make a lasting difference in the lives of the poor, the marginalized and the excluded.

As this guide spells out, ACT Development will come into being in early 2007. But ACT Development is also a "work-in-progress" which will be shaped by the active engagement of its participants.

We look forward to working with ACT Development in the future in our common calling to work together towards a more just and peaceful world.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia
General Secretary World Council of Churches



WHAT IS ACT DEVELOPMENT?

1. Our Vision

Inspired by the Gospel of good news to the poor, participants in ACT Development work towards a world where poverty and injustice no longer exist and all people live in just and sustainable relationships with each other and all of God's creation.

2. Our Mission

ACT Development is a global alliance of churches and related organisations who are mandated to work ecumenically in development and who choose to work together.

3. Our Faith Basis

ACT Development's work is based in our faith in the Triune God of Life: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God the creator endows creation with integrity and human beings with dignity; Christ the redeemer liberates from sin and the powers of death; the Holy Spirit calls us into community and empowers us to work for justice in anticipation of the coming of God's kingdom.

As members of ACT Development we are called to a common task and witness. Accountable to God, to those whom we seek to serve, to those who entrust us with their support and to one another, we accept and commit ourselves to these affirmations which shape the values underlying our work and relationships.

- All persons are created in the image of God with the right and potential to live just, humane and dignified lives in sustainable communities. God has called all human beings to uphold and protect the human dignity and human rights of every living person against all forms of discrimination. The witness of the whole church is more clearly understood by ourselves and communicated to the world when we work together as members of one body of Christ in cooperation with people of other faiths and beliefs.

- The earth and all it contains are God's gifts, given out of love and care for all created beings- living and non-living. All persons are called to participate in the ongoing creation, preservation and sustaining of God's creation and the well-being of the human family. The church is called to embody God's gracious love through Jesus Christ in a wounded world and therefore must respond to the suffering of the earth and all of its inhabitants.

- God as known through the scriptures is the God of love who stands beside the poor and the oppressed. Profession of faith requires the rejection of those conditions, structures and systems which perpetuate human hunger, poverty, injustice and the destruction of the environment. The church is called to be prophetic in its witness for justice and peace as well as to be a presence of consolation and healing. Through our cooperative response to situations of human suffering and injustice we seek to model a vision of restored human community which we believe is God's intention for the human family.



Our Understanding of Transformational Development

Transformational development recognises that the current structures of society perpetuate human hunger, poverty, injustice, the abuse of human rights and the destruction of the environment. Transformational development is therefore about taking action to transform how society is structured, empowering those communities most affected by oppressive structures so that they are able to improve their quality of life. Efforts to promote transformational development vary from the global to the local level and may range from campaigning at the global level on issues such as debt or trade to supporting communities at the local level in their efforts to obtain access to water or secure adequate food. Central to the development process are concepts such as participation, developing capacity and sustainability (see Appendix 1 for a description of further development concepts).

4. Our Goal

ACT Development will promote and facilitate cooperation between participants to improve their effectiveness in transformational development.

5. Our Objectives

ACT Development is an Alliance which will:

1. promote shared values, mutual accountability and high quality development work amongst its participants
2. ensure opportunities where participants can discuss, share analyses and reflect theologically on development issues, learn from each other and plan cooperative activities
3. facilitate participants to work collaboratively to increase their effectiveness in addressing issues of poverty, injustice and the abuse of human rights
4. provide opportunities for participants to work collaboratively in their advocacy work
5. enhance the visibility of the development work of the ecumenical family through a strong sense of identity and shared family name.

6. What Will We Do?

The activities of ACT Development will be based on our mission, goal and objectives and will be developed by the Executive Committee, in consultation with participants, into a 3 year strategic work plan. This section identifies some of the core functions ACT Development is expected to undertake. However, as participants in ACT Development work together at the national, regional and global levels, a wide range of other collaborative activities may be developed.

Objective 1

ACT Development will promote shared values, mutual accountability and high quality development work amongst its participants

This may be achieved by:

- a. implementing a clear and transparent process by which organizations can apply for and be accepted as participants in ACT Development
- b. encouraging participants to undertake high quality work and uphold an agreed set of values and code of good practice through:
 - developing and implementing a peer-review mechanism, a complaints procedure and sanctions mechanism
 - developing a mechanism for approving the establishment of ACT Development initiatives and programmes
- c. fostering an action-oriented approach to learning through collecting and communicating participants' experiences of different development strategies and their impact and providing other opportunities for participants to share experiences and resources and keep informed of best practices
- d. maintaining strong relations with other ecumenical and secular actors working on similar issues

Objective 2

ACT Development will ensure opportunities where participants can discuss, share analyses and reflect theologically on development issues, learn from each other and plan cooperative activities

This may be achieved by:

- a. ensuring opportunities at the national, regional and global levels where participants can build relationships with each other, reflect on burning issues in the field of development, share information on policies and priorities and work intensively on areas of possible programmatic collaboration. Where possible, these meetings will build on and relate to existing ecumenical instruments such as Roundtables, Ecumenical Regional Groups and ACT Fora.

Objective 3

ACT Development will facilitate participants to work collaboratively to increase their effectiveness in addressing issues of poverty, injustice and the abuse of human rights.

This may be achieved by

- a. mapping programmatic work of participants, identifying geographic and thematic areas where ACT Development participants are presently working as well as areas of overlap or duplication
- b. identifying countries/regions or issues where increased cooperation by participants would enhance their effectiveness and facilitating the development of joint programmes



Togetherness of the ecumenical family in development work will open up new horizons in sharing experiences, improvement in quality of work and transparency.

The increasing resource constraints faced by the church based organizations suggests that it is no longer pragmatic for the ecumenical family to mobilize funds from the faith based sources alone; rather they should look beyond.



JOYANTA ADHIKARI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHRISTIAN COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

- c. providing opportunities for participants who have offices in a country/region to meet together, explore how they can coordinate their presence and promote positive relationships with local ecumenical organisations.
- d. developing mechanisms to ensure continuity from relief to development including close collaboration with the ACT International Coordinating Office to identify emergency situations where a coordinated approach is required to long-term development cooperation following the end of an ACT Appeal period
- e. working to harmonise the reporting requirements of participants who provide funds to implementing organisations

Objective 4

ACT Development will provide opportunities for participants to work collaboratively in their advocacy work

This may be achieved by:

- a. working with the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance to map current advocacy work of participants
- b. participants establishing joint advocacy initiatives on issues which have arisen through their joint development work
- c. encouraging participants to share information and resource material and initiate study on certain issues so that a body of shared knowledge can be built up
- d. respecting the mandate, working closely with, and having regular communication with other regional or global ecumenical and civil society organisations currently engaged in advocacy

Our Understanding of Advocacy

Advocacy is central to the process of development. Ecumenical advocacy is defined as:

'action on political, economic, cultural and social issues by churches and their members, church-related agencies and other organisations which aims to influence policies and practices of those in positions of power and influence in order to bring about a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. Marginalised communities must be at the centre of ecumenical advocacy and be their own advocates. The advocacy efforts of others must be seen as an expression of solidarity with and an accountability to those who suffer from the world's injustices and violence. Advocacy can be carried out at a number of levels, from the grassroots to national, regional and global with strategies ranging from awareness-raising to mass-campaigning, lobbying or citizen mobilisation' ¹.

¹ADAPTED FROM THE DEFINITION USED BY THE ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

Objective 5

ACT Development will enhance the visibility of the development work of the ecumenical family through a strong sense of identity and shared family name

This may be achieved by:

- a. ensuring all participants adhere to the policy on co-branding and use the name and logo in publications, stationery and public communication (eg; media)

7. What We WON'T Do

ACT Development will NOT facilitate the transfer of funds

- a. ACT Development will not facilitate the transfer of funds between donor and implementer. In this way, it is different from ACT International which is a funding mechanism and mobilises resources for implementers to use in responding to emergencies.



Under the umbrella of the World Council of Churches all of us are part of one family: agencies and specialized ministries in the North and churches and church related NGOs active in the field of development in the South and East. We are a family with huge potential. Working together we can really make a difference. Let's join hands whenever possible and appropriate.

DR. KONRAD VON BONIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EED – CHURCH DEVELOPMENT SERVICE, GERMANY

b. Determine funding arrangements

Bi-lateral relationships between donors and implementers will continue outside of ACT Development. Alliance participants will continue to make their own decisions regarding who they work with and provide funding to/ receive funding from, and this may include organisations who are not part of the Alliance.

c. Restrict the right of organisations to speak out on issues

While participants in the Alliance are committed to work on common programmes and issues, each organisation still retains the right to speak and act in its own capacity. However, efforts will be made so that participants of ACT Development can speak with a common voice, particularly where they are working together on a joint project.

8. Criteria for Participation in ACT Development

ACT Development is an alliance of churches and related organisations who are mandated to work ecumenically in development and who want to work more collaboratively with each other. Participants must meet all of the following criteria:

- be either:
 - (a) a member church of the WCC, or
 - (b) a department or specialised development ministry of a member church, or
 - (c) an organisation affiliated with at least one member church of the WCC through governance
- the primary mandate of church-related organisations must be to work in the area of development cooperation and all participants must have a track record of significant engagement in this work
- be either a national, regional or international organisation
- adhere to the vision, mission, values, code of good practice and co-branding policies of ACT Development
- commit themselves to work with and strengthen other ACT Development participants with mutual accountability and transparency
- pay the annual participation fee and make a supplementary contribution, based on income
- have audited financial accounts

Where a church has its own specialised ministry for development, it is expected that the ministry itself applies to participate rather than the church.

Observer Status

Ecumenical organisations and churches whose work may be influenced by ACT Development but who either do not meet all of the criteria for participation or who choose not to be participants may apply for observer status. This category may include organisations such as national churches, national councils of churches, regional ecumenical organisations and other ecumenical networks.

Observers will be regularly updated on the work of the Alliance. Observers may participate in ACT Development meetings as appropriate but will not be able to vote when decisions are being made, nor participate in the governance structures of the Alliance. Observers may not co-brand their organisations with the ACT Development name nor use the logo. Observers will be expected to contribute an annual fee.



9. Code of Good Practice

As churches and related organisations working in the area of development, we recognize that we are ultimately accountable to God for how we respond. We are also accountable to those we seek to serve, to those who support us and to each other.

In undertaking our programmatic work, we pledge to

- listen to the perspectives of those whose lives are affected by poverty, exclusion or injustice and to support them as they claim their human rights and work to improve their situation
- work with communities on the basis of need and human rights without any form of discrimination
- ensure those we work with are treated with full respect for their dignity, human rights, culture, and religious beliefs
- ensure the full participation of those with whom we work in the design, implementation, management and evaluation of development programmes, paying particular attention to the participation of women
- use approaches that strengthen existing community capacity and prioritise the use of local resources (human, material, cultural etc)
- strengthen the capacity of churches who are responding to the development needs of their communities, paying particular attention to enhancing the capacity of ecumenical organisations and programmes undertaken by multi-faith groups
- address the root causes of poverty, injustice and exclusion in appropriate ways
- ensure that our communication material does not portray people as helpless victims or in any other disrespectful way but rather highlights the strengths and capacity of communities with whom we work
- not accept conditions on funding from back-donors that would compromise our ability to speak and act independently
- not use any aid for the purpose of proselytizing
- uphold high ethical and programmatic standards in all of our work such as the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief and the ACT International Code on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Power.



We are called to choose life, and to participate with God in mending the world.
We are called from our separateness to work together with others struggling for justice and peace for all of God's creation. We are called to build relationships of mutual respect and accountability, sharing human and financial resources, loving our neighbours as we love ourselves.
My hope is that ACT Development will become an enabling ecumenical instrument for responding to this call for all of God's people.

OMEGA BULA, EXECUTIVE MINISTER, JUSTICE GLOBAL AND ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES, UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

In working together, we will:

- commit ourselves to working with mutual accountability and building relationships based on equality, respect and dialogue. This includes being willing to:
 - account for our actions to others within the Alliance
 - receive feedback (both positive and negative) on our work
 - take this feedback into account when planning further activities
 - participate in a peer-review process
- be transparent with each other, and willing to share with other participants, information which can enhance the effectiveness of ACT Development
- meet and coordinate with other ACT Development participants working in the same country or engaged in similar work and therefore avoid duplication and waste of time, talents or resources
- seek to work collaboratively in other areas of work such as development education, fundraising and advocacy
- exercise stewardship of the human, financial and environmental resources that have been given for the benefit of all of God's creation
- participate in learning opportunities and appropriate fora where we listen to the experiences and realities of each other and reflect on the ever-changing context of our work. All participants will be expected to participate in at least one forum each year at either the national, regional or global level
- share the expertise and skills within our own organisation for the purposes of developing the capacity and skills of others
- acknowledge areas in which our own capacity needs strengthening
- build strong relationships with other ecumenical organisations to ensure a dynamic and coherent ecumenical movement
- seek to resolve any conflicts that may emerge with another participant or an organisation within the wider ecumenical family
- work with broader civil society in developing alliances with other organisations of good will
- ensure that evaluation is an essential part of all programmes of the Alliance, that time is taken to reflect on the lessons learnt and integrated into ongoing ACT Development policies and practice.



Transparency

Transparency is about the provision of information; communicating openly and honestly about what we do/ do not do, how we do it and with what resources.

Working with Transparency and Mutual Accountability

Sharing a common family name brings with it extra responsibilities. A public scandal involving one ACT Development participant could impact negatively on all participants in the Alliance. Conversely high quality development work by participants could enhance the reputation of the whole Alliance. It is therefore essential that strong relationships of trust are built between ACT Development participants and that participants are committed to high quality development work and to being transparent and mutually accountable to each other.

Mutual accountability

Accountability is the process by which we hold ourselves responsible for what we believe, what we do and what we do not do, what we say (in our policy, advocacy and campaign work), how we say it, and what we choose not to say, in ways that show us involving all concerned parties and actively responding to what we learn¹.

As organisations, we have many different stakeholders to whom we are accountable; those we seek to serve, those who entrust us with their support, members, legal bodies etc. A constant challenge is to balance these accountability requirements. Participation in ACT Development brings yet another level of accountability as participants commit to working together with mutual accountability, bound to each other through shared values, analyses, goals, objectives, code of good practice and a common family name.

¹ADAPTED FROM TIMLIN, A; WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY- AN INTERNAL CHRISTIAN AID WORKING PAPER

10. Organisational Structure

a. The Governance Structure of ACT Development

(i) Legal Status

For an interim period of 2-5 years, ACT Development will not seek independent incorporation but rather will operate structurally under the legal status of the World Council of Churches (WCC). This interim period allows time for ACT Development to become established and for discussions to continue with ACT International, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and other related organisations as to the long-term global structure for ecumenical work in emergency response, development cooperation and advocacy.

(ii) The General Assembly

The General Assembly consists of the participants in ACT Development, each participating organization with one vote. Observers in ACT Development may attend open sessions of the General Assembly but do not have the right to vote. Decisions in the General Assembly will be made by simple majority. The General Assembly will meet at least once every three years.

The General Assembly has the following responsibilities:

1. To receive a report from the Executive Committee on the status of ACT Development participants
2. To receive reports on the activities of ACT Development
3. To approve future programmatic directions of ACT Development
4. To approve changes in ways of working
5. To elect the Executive Committee
6. To stimulate cooperation with other bodies both within the ecumenical family and with other networks and institutions involved in development work, including contacts with intergovernmental bodies
7. To receive the annual accounts
8. To decide on the dissolution of the Alliance.

(iii) Executive Committee

The General Assembly elects from its participants an Executive Committee of ten persons with WCC serving as the Moderator of the Executive Committee for the initial period. Participation on the Executive will be balanced between North and South/East. ACT International and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance will be invited to be 'observers' on the Executive for the first three years to ensure close cooperation between the three organisations. The term for the Executive Committee is three years.

The Executive Committee will:

1. exercise full responsibility for implementation of policy decisions between General Assemblies
2. approve new participants in ACT Development, as well as exclude members if necessary
3. monitor compliance with the Code of Good Practice and policies on co-branding



Christian World Service has great hopes for ACT Development. As a small and geographically remote ecumenical agency we anticipate that ACT Development will enhance our ability to take effective action against the causes of poverty. We look forward to improved coordination, understanding and cooperation between participants so that, together in faith, we can do better development work; have a united voice on the world stage; uphold one another in educating and advocating for change in our own countries; and thereby move closer to our vision of a world where the hungry are fed, the naked clothed and the stranger welcomed.



JONATHAN FLETCHER, NATIONAL DIRECTOR, CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE, AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

4. be responsible for making decisions on financial issues, such as budgets, accounting, final financial and audit reports
5. decide on staffing issues and policies, appoint or dismiss the ACT Development Director, and decide on the ACT Development Director's job description
6. plan the meetings of the General Assemblies.

The Executive Committee will meet at least twice per year. Minutes on decisions made will be taken, and sent to the General Assembly. Decisions will be made by a vote of simple majority. As decisions may be made by telecommunication between meetings, the accessibility of members is crucial to the functioning of the Executive Committee. The election of the first Executive Committee will take place at the first General Assembly due to be held in early 2007.

b. The ACT Development Secretariat

To run the daily business of ACT Development, a small ACT Development Secretariat is being established in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva to enable close collaboration with the WCC, ACT and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance.

The ACT Development Director will be appointed by the Executive Committee and is responsible for the Secretariat. The Director is accountable to the General Assembly through the Executive Committee.

The ACT Development Secretariat is responsible for the daily management and development of the Alliance according to Assembly and Executive Committees' decisions, and mandate given from them. During the transitional period, when the ACT Development Secretariat operates under the WCC legal structure, WCC's financial, administrative and human resources policies will apply to ACT Development.

The ACT Development Secretariat will be managed by the Director and all ACT Development staff are accountable to the Director. The Director's job description is determined by the Executive Committee which will also carry out regular performance appraisals of the Director.

The ACT Development Secretariat is expected to work collaboratively with the ACT International Coordinating Office and the office of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance.

c. ACT International, ACT Development and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

It is proposed that a Joint Working Group of ACT International, ACT Development and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance be established to further develop the working and structural relationships between the three organisations. In particular, this Working Group will have responsibility for issues affecting the whole ACT Alliance; eg: use of name, joint programmes etc.

d. The Role of the World Council of Churches

ACT Development will operate structurally under the legal status of the World Council of Churches (WCC) for the first 2-5 years. The World Council of Churches has offered to initially convene and moderate the governing body of ACT Development while it becomes established. WCC will have a permanent ex-officio position on the ACT Development Executive Committee. WCC will also provide a global platform for reflection and analysis, to discuss burning issues in the area of transformational development and to plan programmatic cooperation.



My hope is that ACT Development will strengthen our collective programmatic impact and advocacy for policies to eradicate global poverty, providing a vibrant witness to God's love for all people and creation.

KATHRYN WOLFORD, PRESIDENT, LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF, USA

11. Participant Fees

The annual budget for ACT Development will be met by:

- an annual fee of US\$1 000 for participants
- an annual fee of US\$ 500 for observers
- a supplementary contribution from organisations with an income of over US\$1 million. This will be based on the income of organisations (in the case of churches, the income of the department which deals with development) and capped at US\$75 000 for very large organisations.

12. Applying for Participation in ACT Development

Potential participants and observers must complete an application form and provide other information as requested on the form (an annual report, audited accounts and a description of the organization's experience with two development programmes).

The application form will be considered by a Participation Advisory Group which consists of two members from the North, two from the South and one from the East. This group will make a recommendation to either the Steering Group (2006) or Executive Committee (2007) as to whether the application is accepted, deferred or declined.

If participants wish to be considered for the first Executive Committee or to vote in the elections for the first Executive Committee, the application must be received by November 12, 2006.

13. Further information can be obtained from

Dr Elizabeth Ferris, Convenor of the Steering Group for WCC Email: egf@wcc-coe.org

Jill Hawkey, Consultant on ACT Development for the WCC Email: jha@wcc-coe.org

Faautu Talapusi, Administrator for ACT Development Email: fta@wcc-coe.org

14. ACT Development Steering Group members for 2006

Beth Ferris WCC- CONVENOR

Joyanta Adhikari CHRISTIAN COMMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

Sushant Agrawal CASA INDIA

Christer Åkesson ACT INTERNATIONAL MODERATOR

Rudelmar de Faria LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION-DEPT FOR WORLD SERVICE

Noemi Espinoza CCD HONDURAS

Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel BREAD FOR THE WORLD, GERMANY

Linda Hartke ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

Jill Hawkey CONSULTANT TO WCC FOR ACT DEVELOPMENT

Leonid Kishkovsky ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA- USA

Christoph Mann ECUMENICAL HIV/AIDS INITIATIVE IN AFRICA

Forbes Matonga CHRISTIAN CARE, ZIMBABWE

Daleep Mukarji CHRISTIAN AID, UK AND IRELAND

Donna Derr- CHURCH WORLD SERVICE, USA

Karen Nazaryan WCC ARMENIA ROUNDTABLE

John Nduna ACT INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

Bernard Sabella DEPARTMENT OF SERVICE TO PALESTINIAN REFUGEES, MECC

Jack van Ham ICCO, THE NETHERLANDS



APPENDIX 1

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENT

The following concepts are central to our understanding of development:

- participation- the involvement of people in all aspects of their own development from analysing their situation, identifying their own needs and assets, and the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of development endeavours
- developing capacity- sustainable development enhances the capacity of persons and communities to determine their own future and to increase the utilization of available local financial and human resources. Development which is imposed or remains dependent upon outside support is not sustainable
- non-discrimination- it protects the God-given dignity of each person and does not discriminate on any basis
- gender equality- all development work has a gender impact and does not affect women and men equally. Sustainable development requires a gender analysis of the roles of both men and women within the family and broader community. It also requires the active participation of both men and women in decision making and implementation of development activities to ensure that the activities enhance the status of women and benefit the whole community
- cultural and spiritual sensitivity- although cultural and religious practices can both support and inhibit development, development cannot be sustainable unless the cultural and spiritual practices of persons and communities are recognised, enhanced and incorporated into the development process
- protecting human rights- human dignity and well-being are enhanced through ensuring that governments fulfil their responsibility to protect people's economic, social, cultural, civil, political, religious and communication rights
 - advocacy- mobilising public opinion regarding the root causes of poverty and injustice to influence those in positions of power and influence
 - promoting peace and reconciliation – development planning, particularly for communities that have experienced recent conflict, must incorporate effective prevention and reconciliation strategies
 - effective communication- appropriate communication methodologies are essential to ensure effective participation by communities in all stages of the development process
 - environmental sustainability- sustainable development is environmentally aware, preserving, maintaining and regenerating the natural resource base. Particular attention is paid to the knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples as they relate to the environment
 - over-consumption and lack of sharing of available resources is an obstacle to achieving sustainable development.



OUR UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENT

Isn't ACT Development the initiative of European agencies?

It is true that the initial impetus for ACT Development came from European agencies who were concerned about competing in an increasingly crowded field of NGOs. However, consultations with church and ecumenical partners in all regions have shown that there is a broadly-felt need for an instrument to provide more coordination of ecumenical development work and to ensure a more comprehensive approach in the relief-to-development continuum.

What is the value-added of ACT Development?

ACT Development offers participants the opportunity to collaborate with other ecumenical partners in development work under a common brand name. ACT Development will become known for the high quality of its work, for its global reach, and for the values and vision it upholds. The increasing visibility offered by ACT Development participants is also expected to strengthen participants' ability to raise funds.


Will ACT Development enable Northern agencies to become operational in the South?

Currently, some Northern agencies implement their own programmes in the South as well as work through partners, while others work only through local partners. It is neither the intention, nor the role of ACT Development to enable Northern agencies to become implementers in the South.

What are the responsibilities of participants?

Participants must commit themselves to the values of the alliance, to the code of good practice, and to transparency and mutual accountability in their relationships with one another. Participants must agree to co-branding under guidelines to be established and must pay a participation fee and supplementary contribution in accord with their size.





ACT Development is the latest initiative in Ecumenical Development Cooperation. It is a means for collective action and a route by which ecumenical development actors are motivated and encouraged to plan and implement together with renewed synergy to impact the development processes of the country in which they serve.

BAFFOUR DOKYI AMOA, SECRETARY GENERAL,
FECCIWA & FORMER MEMBER OF THE STEERING GROUP OF PEAD/ ACT DEVELOPMENT

Why 'participants' rather than 'members?'

Experience with other ecumenical bodies has demonstrated that the issue of "membership" is a difficult one for some churches. The term "participant" is intended to allow for the participation of churches and related organizations which might find it difficult to formally apply for membership in an alliance. However, the responsibilities of participants in ACT Development will be very high.

Can mission agencies be participants?

ACT Development is an alliance of churches and related organizations which are mandated to work in development and who are committed to not using their development work to further religious objectives. In a context where there are increasing questions about the activities of evangelical groups, it is important for ACT Development to maintain this integrity.

However, mission agencies which are active in development may apply to become observers in ACT Development and thus benefit from the discussions of conceptual issues and challenges in development.

Why is co-branding important?

In order for the name of the new alliance to attract greater visibility, participants must agree to use the name in association with their own. For example, Christian Care – part of ACT Development. Recognizing that there may be times when an ACT Development participant may need to use other co-brands (e.g. when receiving funds from ECHO or USAID), guidelines will be developed for co-branding to which all participants are expected to adhere.

The process of developing a widely recognizable brand name is a long one. Experience with ACT and other ecumenical bodies has shown that when a more pragmatic approach is taken – when, for example, some participants use the name and some don't – it takes much longer for the alliance to become visible.

By co-branding, the stronger brands of participants will allow the name ACT Development to become stronger.

What does ACT Development mean for the World Council of Churches?

The World Council of Churches (WCC) agreed to take on the role of convening the ACT Development Steering Group in order to assure the coherence of the ecumenical movement. Furthermore, an important part of WCC's mandate is to bring together members of the ecumenical family to discuss issues of concern. The WCC Assembly welcomed the ACT Development initiative and affirmed WCC playing a leadership role in ACT Development. As the founding documents make clear, WCC will chair the ACT Development Executive Committee in its initial years, will provide an institutional home for ACT Development while negotiations are taking place with ACT International, and will provide the global platform for analysis and reflection for ACT Development.

How do we work with secular organisations or those of other faiths?

The Code of Good Practice refers to working with broader civil society in developing alliances with other organisations of goodwill. Many funding organisations already support or work closely with secular organisations or groups of other faiths. While secular organisations and organisations of other faiths cannot be 'participants' in ACT Development, the alliance is committed to working closely with groups who share its vision.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the structural relationship between the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, ACT International and this alliance?

The vision is to bring together ACT Development, ACT International and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) under a common umbrella with a common name. This would not only increase the recognition of the common brand, but would also assure more coherent work in areas which are closely related to each other. The Emergency Committee of ACT International agreed in April 2006, that the new ecumenical alliance for development (formerly known as PEAD) could use the name Action by Churches Together (ACT) and asked the ACT Executive Committee to enter into discussions with the ACT Development Steering Group on the structural relationship between the two alliances.

ACT Development will work closely with the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance in the coming years and hopes to have a proposal for closer structural integration for EAA's next Assembly in 2009. A major focus of these discussions will be on reconciling the two different criteria for participants.

What does it mean to 'work ecumenically?'

Working ecumenically means relating to the 'whole household of God' and not just to one denomination or group. The Code of Good Practice outlines the expectation that participants will work with communities on the basis of need and human rights without any form of discrimination.

As part of the ecumenical family, ACT Development is also committed to strengthening the ecumenical movement and promoting collaboration between existing ecumenical organisations and instruments. Wherever possible, ACT Development will work with and through existing ecumenical bodies and organisations rather than create new infrastructure. ACT Development is committed to transparency amongst the ecumenical family so that duplication is avoided and national churches are aware of, and able to have input into, the work of ACT Development participants in their country.

What will be ACT Development's relationship to the round tables?

As mentioned above, ACT Development will work through existing ecumenical structures – such as ACT Fora and, where appropriate, the regional and national Round Tables facilitated by WCC. The Round Tables differ a great deal; many are managed by their members while WCC is more heavily involved in the early years of round table formation. In Round Tables where there are many ACT Development participants, it might be possible for ACT Development discussions to take place in conjunction with Round Table meetings.

Why isn't the alliance a funding mechanism?

Most of the Northern development agencies have well-established funding mechanisms, with procedures for considering proposals, monitoring and evaluating project work and reporting. By and large these function well and it is not the intention for ACT Development to create new structures which duplicate existing ones.

If two or more ACT Development organisations are working together on a project, can it be called an ACT Development project?

A proposal to establish a joint ACT Development project may arise out of national, regional or global discussions between participants. The project may have either a geographical focus or be issue-based.

ACT Development is an opportunity for so many of us, churches and church-related organizations around the world, to work and witness together, in real communion, because we share the same values of love and care for God's creation. We also share an aspiration for a world free of oppression and injustice.

The alliance will give the churches and their related development organizations in my (Middle East) region, the chance to maintain their much needed visibility and longstanding role in diakonia and development.



ALINE PAPAZIAN, DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL ECUMENICAL RELATIONS, MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

While ACT Development participants are encouraged to work together informally, if a project wants to be undertaken under the name of 'ACT Development,' approval needs to be sought from the ACT Development Executive Committee. This is to ensure quality standards, coordination of ACT Development projects (for example, avoiding a number of similar projects being submitted for European Union funding all under the name of ACT Development), greater ownership of ACT Development projects and, through regular monitoring and evaluation, that lessons can be learnt which will benefit the whole Alliance. Once approved, ACT Development projects may, if appropriate and desired, seek funds from outside the ecumenical network (for example, from the UN system, private institutions) in the name of ACT Development. This joint fund-raising will be carried out by small project-based working groups, rather than by the ACT Development Secretariat.

Can my church have two different participants?

Each church or church-related organisation may have only one participant in ACT Development. Where a church has its own specialised ministry for development, it is expected that the ministry itself applies to participate rather than the church. Member churches of WCC or the Lutheran World Federation do not participate automatically in ACT Development but rather can apply to be either full participants or observers.

Why would an organisation apply to become an observer?

Some organisations will not meet the criteria for participation in ACT Development, but nonetheless be interested in following the discussions on development. As ACT Development plans to have global and national forums where burning issues of development are discussed, observers are welcome to participate in these meetings – to share their experiences and to learn from those of others.

What is the overall budget of ACT Development?

The annual budget for ACT Development is CHF450 000 for 2006 and will increase to approximately CHF650 000-700 000 once the Secretariat is established.

How much will it cost each participant?

In 2006-7 ACT Development participants from all regions will pay an annual fee of US\$1000 and those with revenues over US\$1 million will also pay a supplementary contribution based on their income. Participants in ACT Development are also expected to pay their travel and other costs associated with ACT Development meetings and to help with translating documents into local languages.

ACT Development participants are expected to include participation fees and travel costs into their regular budgets. Observers will pay a fee of US\$500.

What if we decide to apply for participation later?

The process of applying to participate in ACT Development will be an on-going one and decisions about participants will be a regular feature of Executive Committee meetings, beginning in 2007. The advantages of applying for participation before the deadline of 1 November 2006 are two-fold: Participants will be able to participate in the first ACT Development Assembly (January 2007) – the next one will be held in 2010 – and will be able to influence ACT Development's work from the beginning.

A GUIDE TO ACT DEVELOPMENT



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