

Climate Change

The Climate Change Programme of the World Council of Churches is coordinated by Dr. David Hallman (Canada). This booklet is a collection of some of his recent contributions and other key texts that were developed by the WCC Working Group on Climate Change under his leadership. We want to express our sincere gratitude to David for his extraordinary skills, the energy and time he has dedicated to this programme. We also add a statement on Climate Change by HAH the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I.

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The WCC Climate Change Programme

History, lessons and challenges

by Dr. David G. Hallman

Introduction

Justice has been the over-arching framework for the World Council of Churches work on climate change over its 17 year history to date. In the ecumenical understanding, human-induced climate change is being precipitated primarily by the high consumption lifestyles of the richer industrialised nations and wealthy elites throughout the world while the consequences will be experienced disproportionately by impoverished nations, low-lying island states, and future generations. Climate change is thus a matter of international justice and inter-generational justice.

The ecumenical activity on climate change has encompassed ethical and theological reflection, resource development and distribution, advocacy at the international and national levels, regional support for projects primarily in countries of the economic south, and solidarity and accompaniment with churches in areas already experiencing the impact of human-induced climate change.

With relatively modest financial resources, the World Council of Churches has carried on its climate change programme through a creative staffing relationship with a member church; building networks of engaged people in every region;

partnering with member churches, national councils and regional ecumenical organisations in advocacy and project support; consulting with scientific, economic, political and technical expertise on climate change within an ethical framework; utilising electronic communication to mobilise and sustain networks; and linking to other interested agencies and organisations within the ecumenical family.

This paper briefly reviews the history of the World Council of Churches' work on climate change from its inception in 1988 with a special focus on the period since the 8th WCC Assembly in Harare Zimbabwe in 1998. It concludes with lessons learned from the engagement and proposals for next steps beyond the 9th Assembly in Porto Alegre in January 2006.

Historical context for WCC work on climate change

The World Council of Churches Programme on Climate Change has benefited from a rich history of reflection and action within the ecumenical, and to some extent the interfaith, world regarding the inter-connections of ecological sustainability and social justice. In recent years, we have begun to refer to this confluence as “sustainable community”. Though the terminology has varied, the issues have been quite consistent:

What are the basic elements that are required for people to live lives characterised by health, social justice, ecological sustainability, security and spiritual fulfillment i.e. how would we describe what would constitute sustainable community, locally and globally?

What insights do we gain about basic principles for sustainable community from Biblical, theological and ethical reflection?

What are the economic, political, social, environmental, and military impediments to creating and maintaining sustainable community?

How should we respond to the challenges, opportunities and theological/ethical mandates for working to build sustainable community?

The most direct lineage for the WCC Climate Change Programme comes from the work of the former WCC Church in Society which convened a pivotal consultation in Budapest in 1974 to launch a study on science and technology which culminated in a major conference at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1979. One of the organizing foci for the Budapest 1974 event was to reflect on the Club of Rome's report *Limits to Growth*. A key contribution of that event and reinforced by a powerful speech of Dr. Charles Birch at the subsequent WCC 1975 Assembly in Nairobi was the articulation of the concept of "sustainable society", the idea that the world's future requires a vision of development that can be sustained for the long-term, both economically and environmentally. Birch's emphasis on the life style of the industrialised countries laid the ground for the approach of the climate change programme in subsequent years. Without his insistence the term sustainable would not have become of the WCC vision of the future. During the 1970s, the WCC focused this work through a program on the just, participatory and sustainable society (JPSS).

In 1983, the WCC Assembly in Vancouver adopted a process focused on "Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation" (JPIC) through which churches were encouraged to work together on these inter-related themes. Many churches became increasingly attentive to environmental concerns during this period adopting policy statements and initiating education and advocacy activities on specific issues. The JPIC process culminated in a World Convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in Seoul Korea in 1990 at which a series of ten theological affirmations and specific covenants for action were approved which provide a description of the inter-relatedness of economic inequity, militarism, ecological destruction, and racial injustice and the theological, ethical and spiritual basis for affirming and sustaining life in its fullness.

There have also been a number of occasions of interaction between Christian theologians and leaders of other living faiths focused on rediscovering the important contributions from within the traditions and sacred writings of each of the

faith systems which could help move human societies toward greater respect for the natural world and the creation of sustainable community. One of these events was an inter-faith consultation hosted by the WCC in August 1991 to develop proposals for inclusion in an “Earth Charter”.

The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro provided an opportunity for witnessing to the spiritual dimensions of the ecological crisis. Many faiths were represented at the Rio Earth Summit and held joint vigils, ceremonies and workshops. The World Council of Churches sponsored a major ecumenical gathering bringing to Rio 150 representatives of churches from over 100 countries for two weeks of prayer, worship, study and involvement in the Earth Summit.

During the 1990s, the WCC work on environment-related issues focused primarily on global climate change, monitoring the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, and beginning a significant engagement in ethical issues raised by the growth in the biotechnology industry. This work gained a higher profile in a major engagement of the WCC in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, September 2-11, 2002.

Overview of ecumenical activity on climate change

It was within this historical context of ecumenical reflection related to the inter-relationship of ecological sustainability and social justice that a focus on the specific issue of “global warming” began in some WCC member churches in the late 1980s. Scientific evidence had begun to point to a change in the atmospheric composition with potential serious climatic impacts. The Toronto Conference on the Changing Atmosphere in 1988 and the Second World Climate Conference in 1990 (where Dr. Lukas Vischer represented the WCC) were high-profile events which contributed to growing public awareness. The church and ecumenical activity that began at this time was in response to an analysis that climate

change was not only an issue of scientific interest but that it had major ethical dimensions. It was apparent from early on that the richer industrialised nations of the North were the primary contributors to the accumulation of polluting gases in the atmosphere but the developing nations of the South and future generations would suffer the most consequences for climatic disruptions. Hence, it was a problem with ecological and social justice dimensions and represented a major threat to the capacity of societies to develop sustainable communities.

The first global ecumenical participation in an event on climate change was in Washington, D.C. in October 1988 at a consultation sponsored by the then-existing Greenhouse Crisis Foundation established by Jeremy Rifkin. Rifkin invited the WCC to co-sponsor the gathering and Dr. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, recently appointed as Executive Director of the WCC Dept. of Church in Society, agreed. The event brought together a number of church participants (among them David Hallman representing the United Church of Canada and Christoph Stükelberger representing the Swiss Protestant Federation in addition to Granberg-Michaelson), development workers, environmentalists, scientists and politicians to learn more about what we then called “global warming” as it was being documented by the World Meteorological Organisation.

In May 1989, an inter-regional ecumenical network began when Canadian churches and representatives of churches in Europe which were gathered for the Basel Ecumenical Assembly agreed to collaborate on climate change work. The rationale for this trans-Atlantic cooperation was clearly related to the churches’ understanding that they, as members of northern societies, bore the major international responsibility for causing human-induced climate change and thus should take that responsibility seriously through education within their churches and advocacy with the governments and industries in their industrialised countries. This collaboration emanated in a major consultation on the responsibility of churches in northern societies held in Gwatt Switzerland in 1991 co-sponsored by the Swiss Protestant Federation and the Canadian Council of Churches.

Ecumenical work on climate change began thus as an initiative of churches in Europe (especially in Germany, Sweden and Switzerland) and North America (particularly in Canada). The WCC began to include climate change more formally on its agenda after the Gwatt consultation including through designating representatives to attend the inter-governmental negotiations that eventually led to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The WCC provided a profile to the issue of climate change as a priority focus at the World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in Seoul Korea in March 1990. At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the WCC Working Group on Climate Change was formed with participation of representatives from each region. This Working Group with some variation in membership has been the facilitator of the WCC's climate change programme ever since.

As the WCC Climate Change Programme developed after 1992, it had three major foci:

Theological and ethical analysis resulting in advocacy statements and educational resources.

Two consultations were held in Driebergen, The Netherlands, that resulted in WCC resources on the subject:

- Accelerated Climate Change: Sign of Peril, Test of Faith, 1993;
- WCC Statement on Global Warming and Climate Change: a Call to the Churches, 1994 which was adopted by the WCC Central Committee;
- Climate Change and the Churches, Ecumenical Review, Geneva, 1995;
- Climate Change and the Quest for Sustainable Societies, 1998;
- A project specifically focused on issues related to mobility was co-sponsored with the Evangelical Academy of Bad Boll from which several resources emanated:
- Mobility – Prospects of Sustainable Mobility, 1998 was circulated to WCC member churches for feedback;

· Mobile but not Driven, 2000 based on responses from WCC member churches to the earlier mobility report.

A consultation held in Saskatoon Canada in 2000 to reflect on ethical dimensions of emission trading resulted in:

· The Earth's Atmosphere – Responsible Caring and Equitable Sharing for a Global Commons, 2000 which the WCC used prior to and at the UN Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP6) in Den Haag, November 2000 and COP6b in July 2001.

An event in Geneva in November 2001 drawing together representatives of churches and church-related relief and development agencies launched a new WCC focus on the climate change adaptation needs of developing countries and produced:

· Solidarity with Victims of Climate Change, 2002 which led to the ecumenical advocacy statement A Call to Action in Solidarity with those Most Affected by Climate Change, 2002 which was utilised both at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002 and at the UN Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP8) in New Delhi in November 2002.

A gathering of churches from WCC member churches in the Pacific supplemented by international participants from other regions took place on the island atoll of Kiribati in March 2004 and produced:

· Otin Taai Declaration – A Statement and Recommendations from the WCC and WCC Member Churches in the Pacific, 2004

A WCC climate change consultation was held in September 2004 at Woudschoten, The Netherlands. The event was co-sponsored with church-related relief and development agencies to prepare a discussion paper on an ethical framework for climate policy after the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol (i.e. post-2012) and to further develop an ecumenical network on water. One of the products which draws from a

background paper prepared for the consultation by the Dutch host organisation Oikos is the resource:

- Moving Beyond Kyoto with Equity, Justice and Solidarity, 2004;

Advocacy activities

WCC delegations of varying sizes have been present at all UN negotiating sessions since the negotiations began in 1990 which culminated in the adoption at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Once the UNFCCC was ratified by a sufficient number of countries, the major annual implementation negotiating sessions began and are referred to as Conferences of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COPs). At many of the COPs, the WCC accepted the invitation of the UNFCCC Secretariat to make a statement during the High-Level Ministerial Segment.

- COP1 in 1995 – Berlin where a large WCC delegation was present setting the pattern for not only advocacy with delegates during the negotiations but also for ecumenical or inter-faith gatherings with members of the local faith communities on the weekend in the middle of the negotiations;
- COP2 in 1996 – Geneva which featured a service involving members of the Alliance of Small Island States – AOSIS);
- COP3 in 1997 – Kyoto where several large inter-religious events were held including a service in the Catholic Cathedral involving Buddhists, Shintos, Christians, Muslims, Jews and Hindus;
- COP4 in 1998 – Buenos Aires where a large ecumenical service was held at the Basílica “Nuestra Señora del Pilar”, the oldest church in Buenos Aires with a presentation by Ambassador Raúl Estrada Oyuela;
- COP5 in 1999 – Bonn with an ecumenical service and reception addressed by Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the UN Environmental Programme;

- COP6 in 2000 - Den Haag with ecumenical workshops and a service;
- COP7 in 2001 - Marrakech where the WCC sponsored a well-attended Christian-Islamic Dialogue on Environment, an event that was deeply appreciated by United Nations officials coming just two months after the terrorist attacks of September 11th in New York and Washington;
- COP8 in 2002 - New Delhi where the WCC delegation participated in a major parallel event organised by the Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change;
- COP9 in 2003 in Milan where the WCC cosponsored a large gathering at the historic Roman Catholic Church Santi Apostoli E Nazaro Maggiore in conjunction with Council of Christian Churches of Milan and the European Christian Environment Network at which WCC General Secretary Konrad Raiser was the guest preacher;
- COP 10 in 2004 - Buenos Aires with an ecumenical service.

A pre-Kyoto petition campaign was a significant initiative. Member churches of the WCC worked in close collaboration with Roman Catholic churches and religious communities who were encouraged to participate by many national conferences of Catholic Bishops. The Ecumenical Patriarchate's long and visible commitment to climate change work was well reflected in the petition campaign. This campaign was a tangible manifestation of the visible unity of the church engaged across denominational and geographic boundaries in a common endeavour of shared concern for the well-being of God's Creation and the most vulnerable members of it. The petition campaign was organised at the level of the WCC and then implemented in most industrialised country by member churches and ecumenical councils through strategies appropriate to their national context. An invitation was made to the world communions (e.g. World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation) and Christian international organisations in Geneva such as YMCA, YWCA, the Student Christian Movement, etc. to participate. They all signed as did a number of international environmental organisations. To get national campaigns going we had to

identify in each country people or organisations willing to accept responsibility for the national campaign. In some countries, members of the WCC Working Group on Climate Change had simply to turn to friends or individuals. (It is likely no exaggeration to say that the people who organised the campaign in various European countries later formed the nucleus of European Christian Environment Network.) The WCC petition campaign concluded at a pre-Kyoto UN negotiating session in Bonn in March 1997 at a major ceremony where the results of the campaign were presented to senior UN officials. German President Richard von Weizsäcker addressed the gathering and a group of children gave to the moderator of the UN session Argentina's Ambassador Raúl Estrada Oyuela a blossoming cherry branch – with the wish that it may bear fruits in the negotiations in time for COP3 in Kyoto in November/December 1997.

Regional support programme for churches in countries of the economic south. Financial support was provided by the WCC climate change programme for a series of regional and local workshops and consultations, resource development and advocacy initiatives in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This support has been limited since 2002 when a financial crisis within the WCC severely restricted the monies available. More recently, the WCC Climate Change Programme has begun reprioritising this support within the context of solidarity with those most affected by climate change. Efforts have been made to link potential projects with other funding sources such as denominational and ecumenical relief and development agencies. Further, the WCC Working Group on Climate Change has placed more emphasis on solidarity and accompaniment of those communities already experiencing climate change impacts. One significant example was the Pacific Churches Consultation on Climate Change held in Kiribati in March 2004 which culminated in adoption of a statement entitled “The Otin Tai Declaration”. Further ecumenical support for a focus on the Pacific Islands occurred at the International Conference on Renewable Energy (Bonn, June 2004) and the ecumenical consultation on



climate and water (Woudschoten, The Netherlands, October 2004). The WCC's Central Committee affirmed the focus on accompaniment of affected communities and the threat faced by the Pacific Islands at its meeting in February 2005 at which it endorsed the Otin Taai Declaration.

Harare - locating the work in the broader context of economic globalisation

The impacts of economic globalisation were a major focus at the WCC's 8th Assembly in Harare. Numerous plenary sessions, workshops, and sessional committee statements lifted up the destructive effects on nations, communities and the Earth. One event had as its theme "Ecumenical Earth" in which various presentations were made linking the destructive effects on the Earth including climate change and the increasing economic and political concentration of power. The Harare assembly mandated economic globalisation as a priority issue of activity for the WCC.

There are a number of common dynamics that underlie the destructive linkages between economic globalisation and ecology:

- a significant imbalance in power exists between industrialised nations of the north and countries of the economic south which allows the richer nations to exert undue influence in international negotiations on multilateral financial, trade and environmental issues; an important point in case is the potential conflict between the multilateral environmental agreements (such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention on Biodiversity) and agreements and rules of the World Trade Organisation;
- uncritical observance of the ideologies of free markets and deregulation has effectively transferred much decision-making authority from governments with their mandates to address the common good to unaccountable and profit-oriented multinational corporations including the oil industry which plays such a large role in the problem of climate change;

- international financial institutions, whose policies are largely decided upon by the richer industrialised nations, hold nations of the economic south financially hostage and place requirements on them (external debt repayments, structural adjustment programmes, poverty reduction strategy papers) that are touted as being for the benefit of poorer nations but which in many cases undermine social well-being and ecological sustainability in those countries;
- the globalising of an economic system based on an ever-expanding growth in production and consumption to feed insatiable consumption demand in industrialised countries with destructive ecological consequences at local, regional and global levels.

The WCC Climate Change Programme has tried to contribute constructively to the WCC's focus on economic globalisation in the period since the Harare Assembly. The advocacy work on climate change has been centred on the inter-governmental negotiations related to the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. At the sessions of the COPs, the WCC has regularly had the opportunity to make plenary statements in which it has decried the lack of rapid action on the part of the wealthier industrialised nations to limit the impact of climate change on the more vulnerable and economically weaker peoples of the world. The WCC has also supported and publicised the work of member churches and ecumenical coalitions in tackling private sector companies such as the oil industry through such strategies as shareholder resolutions.

The WCC's approach to economic globalisation has not only encompassed the critiquing of ideologies, international and governmental policies and corporate power, it has also posited alternative approaches to building sustainable communities: in the words of the World Social Forum - "another world is possible". The WCC Climate Change Programme has shared this perspective since well before Harare. Many of the climate change resources that have been produced by the WCC lift up visions of sustainable community and strategies for moving in those directions. The project on mobility is one of the most explicit examples.

Lessons learned

Transformative justice

finding our place within Creation

Though many ecological issues underline the interconnectedness of elements of Creation and the impact of human societies on the well-being of ecosystems, there are few that illustrate this inter-relatedness and the destructive power of contemporary human societies as intensely as does the issue of climate change. There is a history of several centuries during which science, economics, and western theology collaborated in a model of human beings as the top of a pyramid of value within the created order with unfettered authority to utilise the rest of Creation to their own selfish ends without regard to the consequences. That model of human domination of the Earth remains deeply entrenched in current economic and political theory and practice.

Within the ecumenical community, there has been a sincere struggling with the concepts and consequences of this history as illustrated in the preceding sections of this paper. A rich discourse has developed with many contributing communities, especially from eco-feminism and Indigenous Peoples' spirituality, pointing to a profoundly different way of thinking and living within Creation. Gradually becoming clearer are some of the dimensions of this transformation which both offers incisive critiques of theologies, economics and political systems that oppress and gives us a vision of liberating life-enhancing ways of being in community with all Creation.

The WCC Climate Change Programme has benefited greatly from the gifts of these communities of thought and practice from around the world in grounding our own work in a broader agenda of transformative justice within the whole Earth community. Especially inspiring have been the connections with marginalised and vulnerable communities whose relationship to the Earth is more intense than the more insulated average western citizen and whose survival struggles with the impacts of the domination model have humbled us.



Faithfulness

spiritual perseverance to sustain engagement given the urgency of and obstacles to dealing with climate change

The science of climate change has been compelling since the 2nd World Meteorological Conference in 1988. Since then and with each passing assessment report of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the implications of unchecked emission of greenhouse gases have pointed to ever-increasing threats to the well-being and indeed survival of many communities and eco-systems. Evidence has accumulated over the past decade that the impacts of human-induced climate change are already being felt to the detriment of many but particularly to those who are already vulnerable given their geography and impoverishment. The urgency of taking drastic action to limit the threat of climate change could not be clearer to us.

We have confronted the obstacles to prompt action to climate change and have found them to be powerful and insidious. The industrial consumption-oriented development model that characterises the richest countries and which others seek to emulate is driven by strong economic and political forces whose goal is primarily greater concentration of wealth. They have been undeniably effective in redefining in western cultures the meaning of personhood from a child of God and citizen of community to an insatiable consumer of products and services. With economic globalisation, this process is expanding world-wide.

But the dynamics behind the increasing threat of climate change lie not only in corporate boardrooms and around political cabinet tables. For those of us living in the wealthier industrialised countries, we find echoes of these destructive forces within our own lifestyles as participants in societies. Many in our countries are insidiously caught up in a materialistic culture and find it difficult to envision another way of living. One of the manifestations of evil may well be this dulling of vision of a way of living in communion with our Creator and all Creation.

One of the most profound lessons that we have learned over the course of the WCC Climate Change Programme is the indispensability of spiritual values and mutual nurture which help sustain our energy for the long-term, empower us to confront the forces of destruction within society and ourselves, and enliven us to articulate and model a more holistic and life-enriching way of being. Prayer, worship, theological reflection and community all play an important role as do our collective efforts to live lives characterised by gratitude, humility, love, justice, sufficiency, solidarity, peace, faith and hope. We are called to be faithful to God's mission for the well-being of Creation. Though we falter often in practice, our commitment remains and grows.

Networking

building ecumenical coalitions

The WCC Climate Change Programme is primarily networks of people – church activists working in different regions on a shared agenda.

The core of the network is the WCC Working Group on Climate Change which consists of about 10-12 people from various regions. Though there has been a certain amount of turn-over in membership of the Working Group, there has also been a considerable consistency which has provided for continuity, institutional memory, and strong working relationships both within the group and with UN, NGO, and governmental officials involved in climate change work around the world. Occasional consultations have been sponsored by the Working Group which bring in a larger constellation of ecumenical participants for focused work on specific subjects e.g. ethics of emission trading (Saskatoon, 2000).

The WCC Climate Change Network is made up of people who have participated in regional or international events supported by the WCC, members of ecological networks of WCC member churches, national councils or regional ecumenical organisations, and others who have asked to be

included on the network as a function of their interest in the ethical perspective which the WCC brings to its climate change engagement. The primary mechanism for linking within the network is the electronic WCC Climate Change Updates which the WCC Climate Change Programme Coordinator sends out every few months. The updates report on the current status of international negotiations, significant developments in the science or politics related to climate change, and activities and statements of churches and ecumenical networks in various parts of the world. The updates allow for network members to keep abreast of developments and to learn from the experiences of those in other regions. The updates to the WCC Climate Change Network are a significant mechanism for nurturing and sustaining involvement in ecumenical climate change work for the relatively minimal cost and energy in maintaining the electronic network and sending out the updates.

Advocacy

coordinated efforts at global, regional, national and local levels

There are various approaches to measuring the effectiveness of the climate change advocacy work in which the WCC has engaged.

The threat of climate change is much worse today as verified by scientists than when the WCC began its work on the issue in 1988. One cannot help but be sobered further by the minimal progress that has been made by industrialised nations in actual limiting greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, many industrialised countries have significantly increased their emissions since the base line of 1990 except for countries with economies in transition whose reduction in net emissions is more a function of their collapsed industrial economies than as a result of actions to increase energy efficiency. Countries in the European Union are making much better progress than those in North America but most industrialised countries still face significant challenges in reaching their Kyoto

Protocol targets. Furthermore, the United States of America where the churches have had a very active climate change advocacy programme for years has withdrawn from the Kyoto Protocol process. Australia also refuses to ratify the Protocol despite on-going advocacy by churches in that country. So how successful has the WCC's advocacy efforts been to get northern industrialised countries to accept their responsibility for human-induced climate change and take action to change? An objective assessment of the evidence to date would not be encouraging.

On the other hand, informal reports from governmental officials in the European Union and in Canada indicate that those governments have considered the churches' voice to be an important component of the civil society pressure for action on climate change including ratifying and implementing the Kyoto Protocol. Civil society groups in Russia, including leadership from a Russian member of the WCC Working Group on Climate Change, were active for years in building public and political support for ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in that country. Within the UN context, the diligence, ethical clarity and longevity of the WCC's presence at all the inter-governmental negotiating sessions since 1990 is viewed with appreciation which is given tangible expression in access for voicing the WCC's perspectives within the negotiations.

Though it is impossible to verify independently, it is possible to make a strong case that civil society's advocacy efforts, within which the churches have been significant partners, have resulted in greater progress at tackling climate change at global, national and local levels than if such advocacy had been absent.

The WCC's advocacy initiatives have been systematically integrated with those of regional and national ecumenical bodies. There has been an important synergy between the WCC and member churches on sharing information, resources and collaborative advocacy.

The theological and spiritual under-girding for the advocacy coordinated by the WCC Working Group on Climate Change is



based on an understanding of discipleship. We are called to be active in helping to realise God's mission on Earth including learning to live with respect in Creation. Our efforts are not to be judged exclusively on the success of their outcomes but on faithfulness with which we pursue our part of God's mission.

Solidarity

relationships with those most affected by climate change

The responsibility of northern industrialised nations to take action to correct the climate change problem that they have been creating has been a basic ethical norm since the inception of the WCC Climate Change Programme. We have often used the framework of "justice" to elaborate various dimensions of this responsibility as was most prominently articulated in the WCC statement at the high-level segment of COP3 in Kyoto in 1997. As the conceptual basis for the WCC Climate Change Programme deepened in partnership with churches and civil society groups around the world, solidarity came to be understood as a dimension of and almost a precursor for justice. The WCC has described the urgency of addressing climate change as a response of solidarity to the real and future threats for those most seriously affected by climate change.

One of the most explicit expressions of such solidarity has been the WCC support for the Pacific Council of Churches (PCC) and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The PCC has issued a number of statements on the threat posed to their societies by climate change. The WCC has distributed those statements in various climate change resources and has shared information from the PCC with member churches. During the WCC's Assembly in Canberra in 1991, a 'covenant' was adopted by church delegates from Europe and the Pacific. The WCC has supported AOSIS within the inter-governmental negotiations including assistance for a tour of AOSIS representatives to European capitals prior to the COP1 in Berlin in 1995. AOSIS representatives were also keynote

speakers at the Ecumenical Service at COP2 in Geneva in 1996. More recently, the concentration on the Pacific Region has been renewed with the March 2004 consultation and subsequent follow-up strategies including the WCC's Central Committee decisions in February 2005.

Related to the concept of solidarity with victims has been the Regional Support Programme through which the WCC has provided financial assistance for churches and ecumenical organisations in countries of the economic South for projects related to environmental education, animation and advocacy. There has been a pronounced focus on vulnerable peoples in several regions. The initial concentration was on African countries in the mid-1990s where pervasive droughts and devastating floods costs lives and livelihoods in already impoverished communities. Added to the WCC regional support programme were a range of marginalised peoples in various ecosystems in India (e.g. forest dwellers, tribal peoples, fishers, mountain communities, and urban poor.) Churches in Latin American countries have also received support through the Climate Change Programme as a function of the environmental citizenship project in which the Conséjo Latinamericano de Iglesias (CLAI) has been an active participant.

Dual focus on mitigation and adaptation

addressing both the causes and consequences of climate change

The majority of the advocacy work of the WCC on climate change has been focused on pressing industrialised countries to reduce their emissions i.e. mitigation of the causes of climate change. For much of the history of the WCC Climate Change Programme, there had been an implicit perception that to devote energies to efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change would be to acknowledge that the advocacy work to avoid climate change would not be successful in getting industrialised countries to reduce their emissions and that climate change would thus be inevitable. To work on adaptation had been seen as a weakening of resolve on the

possibilities of mitigation and hence a weakening of the WCC's solidarity with victims.

Over the years however, the logic of this stance became questionable. In fact, to neglect the needs of vulnerable peoples who are being forced to adapt to already-occurring human-induced climate change would be a violation of the principle of solidarity. The WCC Climate Change Programme thus expanded its focus in 2001 to include adaptation to the impacts of climate change while maintaining work on mitigation of the causes.

It became clear in conceptualising this transition that we needed a broader representation of the ecumenical community around the table. In particular, denominational and ecumenical relief and development agencies (sometimes referred to as specialised ministries) have had a long history of engagement with partners throughout the world in emergency relief and long-term development. Climate change has profound implications for such agencies in terms of the increase in weather-related disasters and the potential of various climate change impacts to undermine years of patient development projects. A gradual building of relationships has occurred between the WCC Climate Change Programme and denominational and ecumenical agencies. A few participated in the first WCC consultation on "Solidarity with Victims of Climate Change" in November 2001. More signed on to the ecumenical statement that emerged from that consultation "A Call to Action in Solidarity with those Most Affected by Climate Change" which was presented at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and again at the COP7 in New Delhi in November 2002. The collaboration has continued to deepen through subsequent consultations in October 2003 and October 2004.

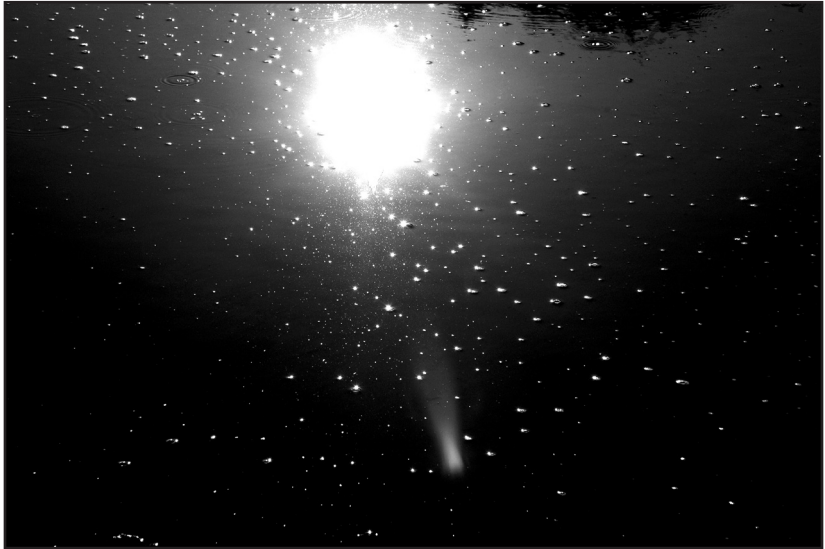
It must be acknowledged though that the building of the relationship between the WCC Climate Change Programme and church-related relief and development agencies has not proceeded as quickly nor engaged as many agencies as had been initially hoped. Our experience though is not unique. A parallel situation exists in the secular world where the "climate change community" and the "development community" have

gradually but warily been recognising a common interest in collaboration. Several organisations have taken the lead in trying to build such linkages including the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Society (Climate Change Project) and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). The WCC Climate Change Programme has had close working relationships with both organisations and has benefited from and contributed to the objective of closer relationships between environmental and development organisations. A primary focus for dialogue among these diverse organisations have been the “adaptation and development” parallel events sponsored at several of the recent COPs.

Linkages

responding to the inter-relationship of climate change and water issues

As soon as the WCC Climate Change Programme began to look in depth at adaptation issues for vulnerable peoples and ecosystems, it became clear that water would need to be one of the significant themes. Climate change has many ramifications. It raises issues of energy, mobility, soil, nature reserves – and of course also water. Climate change is an entry point into the whole of the ecological crisis. Any real response to climate change must take into account the whole range of ecological threats, and it was therefore quite natural that we were constantly led beyond the climate change issue in the narrow sense of the word. But we could cover only a few aspects of the whole range of issues at stake. In recent times water has emerged in many churches as a pressing priority – partly as a consequence of climate change but in many respects independently from it. The protection of water resources has become an inescapable challenge, and we have therefore been led to propose to the WCC to include in its future programme an emphasis on water issues. This future programme should be connected with the climate change programme but should also respond to a wider issues of water protection and just distribution.



Human-induced climate change is having many consequences for peoples' access to clean drinking water including the increase in drought-extended areas and periods of time, floods resulting from extreme weather events that pollute wells and overwhelm sanitation systems, rising sea levels which cause salt water incursions into water sources, etc. In some cases, climate change depletes water availability and in other contexts it becomes a threat by too much as a result of storms, floods, and rising seas. With water being such a basic and indispensable source of life and sustenance, climate change is a very real and profound peril to the sustainability of many communities around the world.

The growing ecumenical relationship between the WCC Climate Change Programme and church and ecumenical relief and development agencies reinforced the appropriateness on a focus linking climate change and water. Many of the agencies had long had projects with Southern partners which sought to increase access to drinkable water in impoverished areas. Climate change poses a threat to the long-term viability of such projects and complicates strategies for sustainability. The interconnection of climate and water became a theme of common interest to the WCC Climate Change Programme and the agencies.

The collaboration between the WCC Climate Change Programme broadened to encompass some aspects of access to water which go beyond the climate change connection. For instance, conditions imposed on some countries of the economic South by the World Bank which require privatisation of water delivery services as a criterion for loan access complicate those nations' efforts to provide water access to their poorest people. Similarly, efforts through the World Trade Organisation to have water services categorised as a tradable commodity open for bidding by transnational corporations risks diminishing public community control and eroding national sovereignty.

The ecumenical cooperation on these inter-related ecological issues of climate change and water led to the formation of the Ecumenical Water Network which is working in close

collaboration with the WCC Climate Change Programme but also addresses some advocacy dimensions of water issues that are not climate-related. Some of the members of the WCC Climate Change Programme are also deeply engaged in the Ecumenical Water Network. The two groups have held several overlapping meetings to make best use of available resources, maximise the shared expertise among the members, learn more about and develop programmes that focus on the important interconnections between climate and water, and contribute to the broader theological and ethical reflection within the WCC on ecology, globalisation and sustainable communities.

Roman Catholic and inter-faith opportunities

limited progress

The WCC Climate Change Programme has endeavoured to reach beyond the member churches of the WCC and engage Roman Catholic partners and peoples of other faiths. It must be recognised however that collaboration to date with the Roman Catholic Church and with other faiths has not developed as intensively as had been hoped.

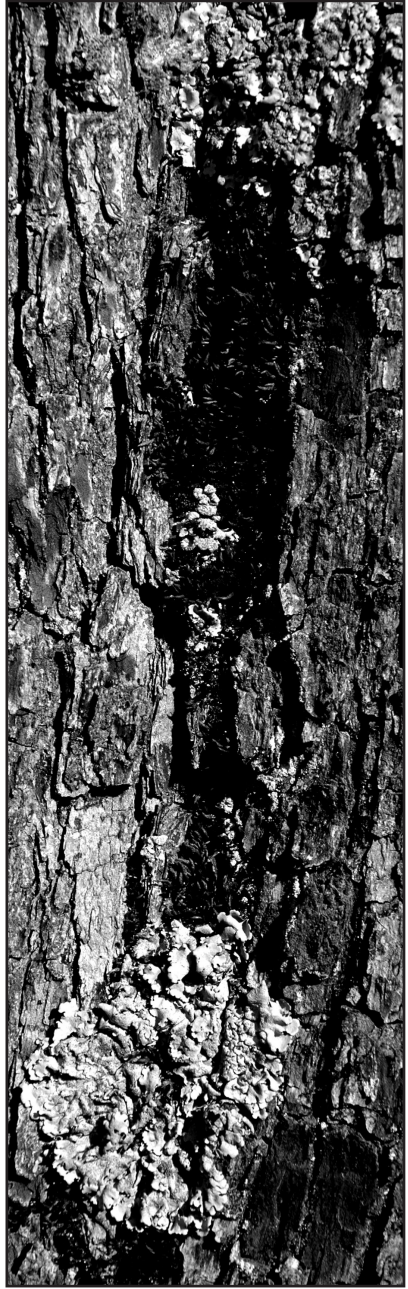
At the national level in many countries and at the regional level in some areas, there has been and continues to be ecumenical collaboration among member churches of the WCC and members of the Roman Catholic Church on climate change work. In The Netherlands and in Canada, their national councils of churches include the respective Catholic Conference of Bishops as well as the Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox Churches in those countries. Catholics including members of religious orders have participated in the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) though the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) is not formally linked. At the global level such collaboration has been difficult to achieve despite numerous overtures from the WCC. The most significant attempt was probably in the lead-up to the pre-Kyoto petition campaign in 1996 and

1997 when direct appeals were made by the WCC to have Catholic endorsement and engagement through the Pontifical Institute for Development and Peace. The one result of the contacts made with the Vatican was a letter sent by Rome to national conferences of Catholic Bishops informing them of the campaign. This perhaps shouldn't be underestimated. It may well have contributed positively to the active engagement of Roman Catholic partner organisations in many of the industrialised countries which conducted the petition campaign. That cooperation however was most pronounced understandably in those countries which had a history of advocacy campaigns organised jointly by member churches of the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church.

Another example of extensive Roman Catholic participation in activities of the WCC Climate Change Programme has been in the sponsoring of events in conjunction with the UN negotiations (COPs) in various countries with significant Catholic populations. The collaboration has been significant in the 2 COPs held in Argentina (1998 and 2004) and at COP9 in Milan Italy where a very large ecumenical service and reception was held in one of the historic RC churches in the city.

Besides the usual ecumenical events co-sponsored by the WCC and the local ecumenical community during most COPs, there could have been further cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church in making interventions in the actual climate change negotiations since the Holy See has the advantage of a seat on the floor with all other nation states. The WCC is by contrast confined to the role of an NGO with the useful but more limited access to making statements that is ascribed to Major Groups within UN meetings. The Holy See is usually represented though at COPs by a local Catholic representative who may or may not have much background in the issues under negotiation. On a couple of occasions, the WCC Climate Change Programme was able to work with the Catholic religious order, Franciscans International, who were present with a delegation at several COPs.

Though the number of occasions in which the WCC Climate Change Programme has had an inter-faith dimension has been even more infrequent than the Catholic collaboration, those



multi-faith gatherings have been profoundly significant for all involved including the WCC, the local faith communities and the UN negotiations. The first major such occurrence was in Kyoto Japan in 1997 where a local inter-faith committee was formed to plan events after an invitation was extended by the WCC and the National Christian Council of Japan (NCCJ). A series of gatherings were held during COP3 in December 1993 involving primarily Buddhists, Shintos, Christians and New Religions in Japan. The culmination was an inter-religious gathering on the middle Sunday of the negotiations with participation from Buddhists, Shintos, Christians, New Religions, Hindus, Muslims and Jews held in the Catholic Cathedral in Kyoto followed by a candle-light procession to a Shinto Shrine where participants were blessed by Shinto Priests. The main speaker at the inter-religious event was Ambassador Raúl Estrada-Oyuele who was chairing the intergovernmental negotiations at COP3.

The UN Climate Change Conference in 2001 (COP7) was the first of the inter-governmental negotiating sessions to be held in a country whose majority population is Islamic. This provided an opportunity for dialogue among members of the Islamic and Christian faiths on how religion can play an integral role in helping to address the threat of climate change. The day-long colloquium included addresses by Islamic and Christian scholars, a panel of governmental delegates and UN officials involved in the COP7, a presentation by a representative of Indigenous Peoples and plenary discussion. The background materials were provided to participants in Arabic, French and English and the entire proceedings were translated simultaneously into the three languages.

The 75 registered Muslim and Christian participants expressed a common conviction as to the seriousness of the climate change problem, the need for individuals and societies to take action and the important role that religious faiths can play in promoting care for the Earth. There was also a strong conviction among participants of the critical relevance for such inter-faith dialogue in the current global context (i.e. 2 months after the 9/11 attacks) - a witness of Muslims and Christians

sharing ideas and bread together. Appreciation for the WCC's role in organising this inter-faith event was expressed forcefully by senior UN officials present who saw the initiative as profoundly important in contributing to an atmosphere where despite international tensions cooperative dialogue could happen within the negotiations on the common concern of climate change.

Regrettably, these two occasions of major inter-faith events at COP3 and COP7 have however been the exception rather than the rule over the history of the WCC Climate Change Programme. There have been a few other possibilities through which deeper and more sustained inter-faith work on climate change might have developed including in cooperation with the Alliance of Religions for Conservation (ARC). However, for various reasons, these initiatives were not sustained.

Visioning

articulating an ethical basis for climate change policy for the long-term

The WCC Climate Change Programme has existed for a considerable period of time – almost 17 years. This engagement of the WCC has been an expression of its understanding that to address the issue of climate change with integrity requires a commitment over the long-term in part because of the timelines of the science and politics involved but also because to be in solidarity with vulnerable peoples of this and future generations as they experience the impacts of climate change demands that the faith community be in accompaniment with them.

The coming into effect as international law of the Kyoto Protocol is a major step in building an international legal regime to tackle climate change. But the WCC among many others has made it abundantly clear that Kyoto can only be seen as a modest first step and that much more aggressive and sustainable initiatives are needed to reduce the emissions contributing to human-induced climate change. Over the past several years, the WCC Climate Change Programme has thus

commenced a study project to help articulate an ethical basis for climate change policy over the long-term. The ecumenical organisations in The Netherlands, Oikos and Kerkinactie, have been important collaborators in this project by sponsoring detailed research and drafting proposals for ecumenical consideration. A consultation was held in The Netherlands in early October 2004 at which visioning a post-Kyoto climate change policy framework was a major agenda and resulted in a new WCC study document “Moving Beyond Kyoto with Equity, Justice and Solidarity”.

The WCC with its new study document “Moving Beyond Kyoto with Equity, Justice and Solidarity” is among a growing number of organizations exploring options for a climate policy framework for the period after the conclusion of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol i.e. post-2012. Among the major issues that these various studies are addressing:

- the lack of progress of many industrialized countries in making significant reductions in their emissions;
- the implications of the Kyoto Protocol coming into effect as international law;
- the absence of the United States of America from the Kyoto Protocol and the Bush Administration’s continuing obstructionism on progress within international negotiations;
- the growing scientific evidence that climate change is already happening with global temperature rise above that of the pre-industrial period already approaching the 2C limit that most analysts consider the maximum that the atmosphere can handle without devastating climate impacts;
- the importance and urgency of increasing the capacity and the funding for poorer nations to adapt to the impacts of climate change that they are already experiencing and prepare themselves in order to reduce their vulnerability to both rapid onset events (e.g. hurricanes, typhoons, floods, etc.) and slower onset impacts (e.g. drought, sea level rise, shifting precipitation patterns and agricultural regions);
- the appropriateness of some differentiation within the category of “developing nations” (which negotiate as a block

called G77+China) with some having reached significant levels of industrialization as measured by per capita income, others rapidly industrializing into major global economic powers, and many others remaining very poor and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change;

- scenarios that might provide for a range of emission limitation commitments for developing countries depending on their pace of industrialization while not jeopardizing sustainable development;
- the need to shift toward a low-carbon economic system for all countries.

Challenges ahead

Promote a transformation toward low carbon-intensive economies

The WCC should promote a shift in energy, industrial and transportation policies particularly in high per-capita consuming countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) up to 80%. The IPCC has projected that GHG emissions will need to be reduced by 60% globally in order to stabilise atmospheric concentrations at a level to avoid the most dangerous climatic changes. In order to allow continuing development in impoverished countries, the largest part of the GHG emission reductions needs to occur in the wealthier countries.

The process toward less carbon-intensive economies must include ecumenical pressure for Kyoto Protocol implementation and compliance, the negotiation of more ambitious post-Kyoto targets, the development and utilisation of alternate renewable energy systems, etc.

Churches and their members, particularly in richer nations, need to model simple lifestyles that emphasise the value of relationships with the Earth, families, and community rather than high material consumption.

Support communities affected by climate change

The WCC should accompany communities affected by climate change both through ministries of solidarity and presence as well as through practical support of community-based initiatives for adaptation projects and renewable energy systems. Key to support for affected communities on issues related to climate change is the need for a dynamic and intensive collaboration with denominational and ecumenical relief and development agencies.

Persons from such communities should be participants in ecumenical delegations to national, regional and international events where their voices, stories, experiences and recommendations can be pivotal in ecumenical advocacy positions and activities.

Deepen and broaden the WCC climate change work in relation to:

- Theological foundations in terms of faith perspectives, ethical implications and spiritual engagement;
- Intensifying the mobilisation of WCC member churches to be engaged in education with their constituencies, advocacy with government and industry, and practical actions in their own congregations and communities to model a less carbon-intensive lifestyle;
- Ecumenical and interfaith partnerships with the Roman Catholic Church and other living faiths;
- Ecological systems including linking to other issues such as energy, biodiversity, desertification, biotechnology, etc.
- Global economic systems such as international financial institutions and transnational corporations;
- Civil society partners with whom the WCC can develop mutually-supportive collaborations on campaigns and specific projects.

WCC Climate Change Resources (the more recent of the following are available on the WCC web site in the climate change section at <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/jpc/ecology.html>)

Among the study papers, publications and declarations of the WCC over the years are:

- North/South and Global Warming -Toward an effective and equitable basis for negotiating climate change conventions and protocols, 1989
- Accelerated Climate Change: Sign of Peril, Test of Faith, 1993
- WCC Statement on Global Warming and Climate Change: a Call to the Churches, 1994
- Climate Change and the Churches, Ecumenical Review, Geneva, 1995
- Climate Change and the Quest for Sustainable Societies, 1998
- Mobility – Prospects of Sustainable Mobility, 1998
- The Earth’s Atmosphere – Responsible Caring and Equitable Sharing for a Global Commons, 2000
- Solidarity with Victims of Climate Change, 2002
- A Call to Action in Solidarity with those Most Affected by Climate Change, 2002
- Otin Taai Declaration – A Statement and Recommendations from the WCC and WCC Member Churches in the Pacific, 2004
- Moving Beyond Kyoto with Equity, Justice and Solidarity, 2004



THE OTIN TAAI DECLARATION*

The Pacific Churches Statement on Climate Change

*Otin taai, pronounced “osin tai”, means sunrise, a symbol of hope in the Kiribati language

*A Statement and Recommendations from the
Pacific Churches' Consultation on Climate Change
6-11 March, 2004, Tarawa, Kiribati*

Let all the islands rise and sing and to our God their praises bring,

On strings and drums God's might proclaim to shout the glory of God's name.

Pasifika, Pasifika, with throbbing reef and coral shore,
For fish and shell and mighty whale, for all God's gifts our thanks we pour.

Overview

Here on the small island atoll of Kiribati, the impacts of human-induced climate change are already visible. The sea level is rising. People's homes are vulnerable to the increasingly high tides and storm surges. Shores are eroding and the coral reefs are becoming bleached. The water supplies and soil fertility are being threatened by the intrusion of salt water. Weather patterns are less predictable posing risks to fisher-folk and farmers.

Kiribati is not alone in its plight. Many other island nations in the Pacific are experiencing similar impacts of human-induced climate change. Our peoples, who number about 7 million, are already suffering and are vulnerable to more impacts in the future.

We, participants in the Pacific Churches' Consultation on Climate Change, feel called by God to:

Affirm our commitment to care for the earth as our response to God's love for creation;

- Declare as forcefully as we can the urgency of the threat of human-induced climate change to the lives, livelihoods, societies, cultures and eco-systems of the Pacific Islands;
- Dedicate ourselves to engaging our churches in education and action on climate change;
- Commit ourselves to ecumenical collaboration among our churches and with other religious and secular bodies in the Pacific and beyond that will increase the effectiveness of our national and regional efforts;
- Call on our sisters and brothers in Christ throughout the world to act in solidarity with us to reduce the causes of human-induced climate change. We issue this call particularly to churches in the highly-industrialized nations whose societies are historically responsible for the majority of polluting emissions. We further urge these countries to take responsibility for the ecological damage that they have caused

by paying for the costs of adaptation to the impacts that can be anticipated;

- Invite church-related specialized ministries for emergency-response, development and advocacy to integrate climate change and adaptation projects into their policy-development, education and advocacy;
- Express appreciation to the World Council of Churches for its support of the Pacific churches on the issue of climate change and request that the voices of the Pacific become increasingly reflected in the WCC Climate Change Programme and in the next WCC Assembly in 2006;
- Pressure all countries to ratify and implement the Kyoto Protocol*, especially highly-industrialized nations such as the United States of America, Australia and the Russian Federation which to date have not ratified the Protocol;
- Encourage companies that are major producers or consumers of fossil fuels to support a transition toward less carbon-intensive economies, reduced energy usage and the development of cleaner, renewable energy sources.

Who We Are

The Consultation involved 45-50 people most of whom were from Pacific Island countries (Kiribati, Nauru, French Polynesia, Niue, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, American Samoa, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, and the Cook Islands). Ten of the participants came from outside the region (Argentina, Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Japan, Norway and the USA). A number of resource persons from Kiribati and other South Pacific countries attended. Included among the Pacific and international visitors were pastors, youth workers, church representatives, members of the Kiribati Protestant Church, and Pacific Conference of Churches and World Council of Churches staff persons.

Our Context

We are aware that this Consultation builds on an important history of ecumenical concerns for social and ecological justice here in the Pacific. Nuclear testing with its long-term consequences is one significant example. More recently (August 2001), the Pacific played host to a WCC global conference on economic globalisation that brought together representatives of churches, ecumenical and civil society organization from 29 countries. Entitled *Island of Hope – A Pacific Alternative to Economic Globalisation*, the gathering affirmed that “spirituality, family life, traditional economy, cultural values, mutual care and respect are components of the concept of the Island of Hope which prioritises relationships, celebrates quality of life and values human beings and creation over the production of things.” This current Climate Change Consultation can be seen as a continuation of the Pacific churches’ commitment to challenging those forces which threaten human community and creation and to modeling alternative approaches of justice and love.

Specifically in terms of climate change, our context for this consultation is a region that will be very severely affected. It is predicted that the Pacific Region will likely warm by between 0.6 and 3.5 degrees C in this century, a rate of warming which is much larger than the observed changes during the last century and very likely without precedent during at least the last 10,000 years. For the Pacific peoples, perhaps the most significant negative effect of these higher temperatures is the rise of sea levels resulting from thermal expansion of oceans, melting ice-caps and increased precipitation. It is projected that sea levels will rise by as much as 5mm per year over the next 100 years as a result of global warming.

Human-induced climate change will have an extensive range of negative impacts on peoples of the Pacific Islands including:

- Loss of coastal land and infrastructure due to erosion, inundation and storm surges;
- Increase in frequency and severity of cyclones with risks to human life, health, homes and communities;

- Loss of coral reefs with implications for the sea eco-systems on which the livelihood of many Islanders depends;
- Changes in rainfall patterns with increased droughts in some areas and more rainfall with flooding in other areas;
- Threats to drinkable water due to changes in rainfall, sea-level rise and inundation;
- Loss of sugarcane, yams, taro and cassava due to temperature extremes and rainfall changes;
- Human health impacts with an increase in incidence of dengue fever and diarrhea

What We Believe

Throughout the Bible from the Genesis creation story onward, we learn about God's love for the earth and all its creatures including humanity. The Biblical understanding of the wholeness and inter-relatedness of all creation has some similarities to the traditional Pacific teachings about the land known as Vanua/Fonua/Whenua/Enua and the ocean referred to as Moana. The implications of this vision include the need for us humans to live with respect and humility within God's creation. Responding to God's love for creation, we are called to care for the earth and limit destructive activities such as those that contribute to climate change.

Being good stewards or custodians leads to a reciprocal relationship between people and the earth. We are dependent on the earth and must take care of it. If we do so, the land and oceans will yield bounty sufficient for all. Conversely, if human societies damage the earth, people suffer.

We would like to say a word about God's promise to Noah not to flood the earth again. Some Christians view this covenant as a guarantee that they are not at risk of flooding from climate change. But the sea level is rising and threatening Pacific Islands with flooding from high tides and storm surges. This is not an act of God. It is a result of human economic and consumer activities that pollute the atmosphere and lead

to climate change. Most of these polluting emissions come from highly-industrialized countries. Our response to God's covenant with Noah should be to act in love toward God's creation and to reduce the pollution that is contributing to climate change. By placing us on the earth, God has given us both the right to use it and the responsibility to do so with care.

What We Have Done Together

The Kiribati Protestant Church (KPC) played host to the Consultation. The leaders and members of the KPC were incredibly generous in their hospitality and organizational work. Most participants were hosted in community homes. The KPC sponsored numerous feast and cultural evenings as well as facilitating the logistics for this international gathering. We are very appreciative and indebted to them.

We benefited enormously from the Youth Consultation that took place in Kiribati immediately before the Pacific Churches' Consultation on Climate Change. Twenty-three young people gathered for four days of worship, singing, study on climate change and the drafting of recommended strategies for ecumenical action both for Pacific youth and for the churches. When the Pacific Churches' Consultation began on March 6th, the youth brought their passion and expertise on the issue of climate change into larger the event.

The delegates for the Consultation arrived in Kiribati on Friday March 5th and immediately became immersed in the worship and cultural life of our hosts the Kiribati Protestant Church by participating in the World Day of Prayer Service in the community of Bairiki. A community feast and cultural evening followed the service. Saturday was spent in exposure visits to areas on Kiribati where there is clear evidence of the erosion caused by the rising sea levels, high tides and storm surges. A welcome dinner sponsored by the Kiribati Protestant Church took place on Sunday evening with more indications of the generosity of the Kiribati people. Participants attended worship in various communities on Sunday. The

Consultation programme sessions ran from Monday March 8th to Wednesday March 10th with such elements as morning devotions and Bible study, a dialogue with the Kiribati Minister of Environment (Hon. Martin Puta Tofinga), an introduction to the WCC Climate Change Programme (David Hallman and Nafisa D'Souza), a key-note address on the inter-relationship between oil-producing countries and climate change affected countries (Atle Sommerfeldt of Norwegian Church Aid), and presentations on climate change in the Pacific Region by the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (Andre Volentras) and the World Wildlife Fund (Amelia Makutu). Plenary and small group discussions were interspersed through the programme.

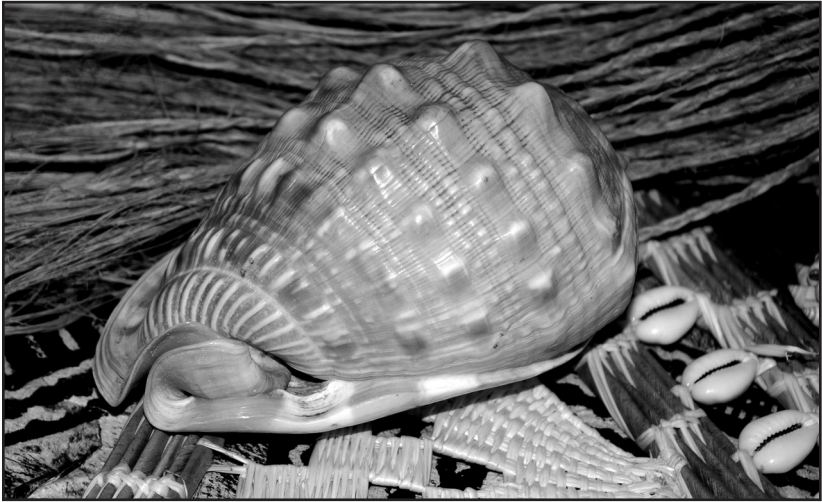
The Consultation culminated with deliberations on a draft statement and recommendations which emerged from the plenary and small group discussion sessions.

Recommendations

To the Pacific Churches

1. Encourage the local churches to include in their annual budgets money to be used for education of their congregations on the issues regarding climate change.
2. Youth members be used to spearhead activities relating to climate change awareness.
3. Churches work together with ecumenical partners in the sharing of information.
4. Encourage local churches to promote their own workshops and not wait for the national or regional ecumenical organizations to facilitate consultations on climate change.
5. Church leaders take the initiative on the work of churches on climate change through Bible studies and sermons focusing on the creation stories and other relevant Biblical scriptures pertaining to it.

6. Work in partnership with the government and ecumenical partners to implement policies that will ensure that climate change becomes part of the curriculum of schools and theological institutions.
7. Include the issue of climate change in Christian education curriculum by 2005.
8. Promote a day of prayer specifically related to climate change.
9. Form a committee within each church to deal with issues of climate change including educating the people on its effects and receiving feedback through story-telling and specific examples of changes happening in the local environment.
10. Emphasise the theology of creation in the seminaries and how it relates to climate change and the life of the Pacific people
11. Utilise existing church and educational structures to raise awareness of climate change e.g. church committees, women's and men's groups, youth groups, Sunday school, parents and teachers associations.
12. Climate change resources be made available in local languages and scripture teachings be in local languages.
13. Churches (pastors) equip themselves with an eco-theology to fully understand the relationship of God, nature and the people.
14. Include Biblical texts related to creation and relevant to climate change in lectionaries.
15. Nominate from within their own faith community, a coordinator to work with the local churches and communicate with other interested parties to observe and accompany the implementation of the recommendations.
16. Use mass communication to disseminate information on climate change issues.
17. Make active use of existing materials, resources and organizations (WCC, WWF, SPREP, etc.). approved



To the Pacific Conference of Churches

1. To increase, improve, update and disseminate to the Pacific Churches information on climate change from the region and Global bodies.
2. Recognize coordination work from individual churches and promote climate change through mass media and promotional items ie T-shirts, caps etc...
3. To produce, provide, and share theological resources that focus on prayer and reflection related to climate change through consultations and workshops.
4. To set aside a specific Sunday as Pacific Climate Change Sunday.
5. To engage groups from other religious traditions in dialogue and action on climate change (e.g. inter-faith activities in Fiji)
6. To prioritise the issue of climate change on the agenda of PCC Executive Committee and the PCC 2007 Assembly.

To the World Council of Churches and to WCC Member Churches

1. Continue supporting the Pacific Islands in their struggle on climate change.
2. Include at least one representative from the Pacific Region on the WCC Working Group on Climate Change.
3. Publish the Consultation's declaration, report, youth statement and plan of action, and background materials.
4. Translate the Consultation materials and send them to the churches.
5. Monitor and accompany the implementation of the Consultation recommendations in the individual churches of the Pacific.

7. Offer a space to the representatives of the Pacific churches to the WCC Assembly (Porto Alegre, Brazil 2006) to share their concerns on climate change in addition to the allocated time for the sharing from the regions.
8. Strengthen the WCC Climate Change Working Group to continue working with churches of the Pacific Region and at international levels.
9. Facilitate a follow-up consultation on climate change.
10. Assist Pacific churches in gaining financial assistance for activities on climate change.
11. Provide updated information on climate change including obstacles and solutions.
12. That the participants from this consultation continue to be involved in follow-up meetings and/or events on climate change in the Pacific to share the understanding that they have developed on the issue.
13. Continue to pursue dialogue with OPEC countries to support reduction of fossil fuel use causing climate change and involve assistance from the interfaith working group of WCC.
14. Facilitate the attendance of a delegation from Pacific countries affected by climate change to attend the Annual General Meeting of one oil company every year from 2005
15. Notes that the WCC Office in the Pacific will co- host the Pacific Islands Regional Roundtable on Nature Conservation in 2004 in partnership with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). Building on this partnership, the WCC OP and SPREP will work closely to raise public awareness and develop educational tools related to climate change and the associated thematic issues identified under the SPREP Action Plan 2005-2009.
16. That WCC facilitate a special presentation by Pacific young people on the effects of climate change in the programme of the 2006 WCC Assembly.

To Denominational and Ecumenical Specialised Ministries for Emergency-response, Development and Advocacy, both in the North and the South

1. Make climate change a priority and provide resources for activities on climate change (e.g. awareness-raising, adaptation, emergency relief, advocacy) by churches/church-based organizations.
2. Formulate comprehensive policies on support to adaptation programmes in countries severely affected by climate change. This should include:
 - Strategic emergency-preparations on a local, national, regional and global level within the context of Action by Churches Together International (ACT)
 - formulate programmes aimed at increasing the capacity of churches and church based organisations to:
 - awareness-raising - networking with other relevant actors in the civil society, government and the private sector - project implementation in local communities
 - Prioritise programmes in long term development which are part of adaptation measures, including if necessary a change in priorities, e.g.
 - Emergency-preventing projects
 - Alternative energy in all development programmes
 - Water programmes
 - Rehabilitation projects
3. Advocate, specifically in the OECD-countries for increased funding for adaptation programmes.
4. Encourage teaching institutions to include climate change in denominational theological institutions and seminaries.
5. Encourage recognition that the devastating effects of climate change are a reality in the Pacific and that resources both personnel and funding are required to assist those affected.
6. Support disaster-relief in the Pacific Island countries.

To Governments in the Pacific

1. Continue their struggle and passion for the survival of Pacific Island countries
2. Be proactive and implement a feasible and sustainable action plan on climate change.
3. Invite NGOs and churches to participate with government to confront the issue of climate change.
4. Promote awareness on climate change and variability through informal education activities, through the mass media, annual international occasions such as World Environment Day and in all departments in the governments as a cross-cutting issue.
5. Enforce legislation to minimize the misuse of natural resources (sand, gravel & forests, etc.)
6. Work in cooperation with the churches using mass media to give updated information on climate change.
7. Extend government projects on education and awareness programmes to the churches in the Pacific.
8. Strengthen political leadership in enacting legislation related to climate change.
9. Provide precise information concerning governmental action plans and the situation on climate change in the respective countries (transparency).
10. Ensure the optimum preparation of the negotiators at the international levels.
11. Work towards the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.
12. Provide an increased budget for adaptation measures.
13. Support research and studies on limiting the effects of climate change and the technologies to be put in place to decrease the vulnerability of Pacific Island countries.
14. Address climate change as a top priority in national development plans, policies and strategies.

15. Invest in education and training to develop the capacity required to fully address national concerns related to climate change.

To the Governments of Highly-Industrialised Countries (Annex 1 Countries in the Kyoto Protocol)

1. Acknowledge their special responsibilities for the effects of climate change - take action immediately because the Pacific people are suffering, crying and dying right now
2. Reduce fossil fuel production/consumption and increase use of renewable energy.
3. Provide scholarship funds to students of the Pacific for higher educational level studies on the issue of climate change.
4. Ratify and implement the Kyoto Protocol
5. Increase budgets for adaptation programmes in the Pacific.
6. To implement the reduction targets specified in the Kyoto Protocol within the first commitment period.
7. To relocate and compensate the victims of climate change as requested by Pacific countries.

To Major Fossil Fuel Producing and Energy Consuming Companies

1. We demand that these companies change their attitude and policies and recognize that they share accountability for the effects of climate change and contribute to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Special Climate Change Fund for adaptation activities in the Pacific.
2. Company scientists and government bodies should see firsthand the effects of climate change by visiting the Pacific and meeting with the peoples affected.

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3. Reorient their work to focus on renewable energy as priority programmes of action.

4. Support shareholder actions and petitions which address climate change.
5. Members of the governing bodies of these companies should consider the theological views of churches that address climate change and recognise what their companies are doing to God's creation.

** The Kyoto Protocol was negotiated by countries through the United Nations in 1997 in Kyoto Japan. The Protocol sets out actual targets with a set time frame for industrialized countries (referred to as Annex 1 countries in the Protocol) to reduce their polluting greenhouse gas emissions that are leading to climate change. The Protocol includes provisions (e.g. the Clean Development Mechanism) that allow highly-industrialized (Annex 1) nations to meet part of their targets by funding sustainable projects in developing nations. The Kyoto Protocol has yet to come into force. In order for it to become international law it requires at least 55 countries to ratify it by adopting it in their parliaments or legislatures. More than 100 nations have so far ratified. But the Protocol must also be ratified by highly-industrialized (Annex 1) countries making up at least 55% of total greenhouse gas emissions in industrialized nations. Australia and the United States, although major emitters, have announced that they will not ratify the Protocol. This leaves Russia as the only highly-industrialized (Annex 1) country with enough emissions to meet the 55% criteria in the Protocol and thus bring it into effect. Russia is still deliberating whether to ratify.*



Tsunamis and climate change - where is God?

by Dr. David G. Hallman

The Earth seems to be convulsing recently with a variety of natural and weather-related disasters. Many people have died. Are tsunamis and climate change related and where is God in all this?

We are vulnerable to forces beyond our control. To acknowledge that, is to become more humble and respectful toward this terrestrial home of ours. But just as humans are the victims of some unexpected cataclysms, we also are the actual perpetrators of other types of ecological changes that are wrecking havoc.

The earthquake under the Indian Ocean which produced the devastating tsunamis on December 26, 2004 was part of a geophysical process of the Earth that predates human existence and which will continue longer than our human species does.

In this sense, the tsunamis are absolutely independent of human-induced climate change.

We cannot prevent tsunamis.

We can prevent climate change – or at least, we know enough to reduce the degree of human-induced climate change.

Regardless of the protestations of the sceptics, current science demonstrates that the atmosphere is warming as a result of human-produced emissions largely from the burning of fossil fuels. A warmer atmosphere results in many sorts of climatic changes including rising sea levels, more intense and frequent storms, erratic and extreme weather events in summer and

in winter, extended droughts followed by torrential floods. Sound familiar? If we cut back dramatically on the amount of atmospheric pollution, we can slow the pace of global warming and limit the degree of catastrophic climate change.

While tsunamis and human-induced climate change are distinct, there are profound connections. The loss of so many lives and the destruction of communities by the raging ocean waves on December 26th are illustrative of the same impacts that are already resulting from rising sea levels and increased tropical storm activity. Coastal communities, low-lying island states and river delta areas are among the most vulnerable to tsunamis and climate change.

Secondly, poverty rates and development models contribute to people's levels of vulnerability. The high death toll in impoverished Haiti from the hurricanes in September 2004 relative to that of other Caribbean islands and the United States can be in part explained by the lack of warning systems and protective infrastructure and by the mud slides from the denuded hills with their massive tracks of deforested lands. One of the lessons from the tsunamis in Asia is that communities suffered more where the natural mangrove forests along the coasts had been eliminated to open the areas for international tourism, large-scale commercial fisheries and other industrial development.

Thirdly, many of the strategies that can help communities adapt to expected climate change can also reduce their vulnerability to the devastation of tsunamis: early warning systems, structurally sound community facilities to retreat to for protection, tree stands that reduce erosion and retain soil fertility and small-scale water harvesting projects that safeguard drinking water for times of crisis.

Why did God let the tsunamis happen? We have a malevolent deity if we attribute them to an "act of God". Many people devastated by the impacts of December 26th are surely asking, in a variety of spiritual languages, what have we done to deserve this? or why has God abandoned us? To say that the love of God is manifested in the unprecedented global outpouring of relief efforts is true but of little comfort to those who have lost families, homes and livelihoods.

For many people, a spiritual faith does help them to pick up the pieces of their lives and in community with others, to go on. Nonetheless, the question asked for aeons remains unanswerable – where was God in all this?

Not so with climate change. God is front and centre giving us plenty of signs of the times. Science is showing us that polluting emissions are changing the atmosphere's composition and leading to climate change. Ethics underlines that these emissions have come overwhelmingly from the richer industrialised societies and elites and yet it is the world's poor and vulnerable both human and non-human and future generations who will suffer disproportionately from the impacts. Alternate economic approaches point us beyond economic globalisation toward models of sustainable communities with enough for a good quality of life for all and in which we use energy much more efficiently and develop cleaner renewable energy sources. And spiritual discernment forces us to recognise that an energy efficiency revolution must be accompanied by a sufficiency revolution through which we value relationships with God, Creation, our families and all the human community rather than focusing on a lifestyle seeking satisfaction primarily through every-increasing material consumption.

Maybe that's where God is in all this. By taking action on climate change where we are pretty sure that we can discern God's will for us, we can reduce our collective vulnerability to some of those unpreventable natural disasters where it is harder for us to find God.

Regardless of the type of disaster, our response should reflect our commitment to each other. We need to accompany those who are suffering over the long-term of rebuilding their lives not just providing aid in the immediate disaster response. We can make the changes in our lifestyles and economic systems that will reduce the potential for some types of 'natural' disasters as one manifestation of our solidarity with those most affected.

We find God most poignantly in community and it is in community that God seeks to find us.



WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES STATEMENT

TO THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

(COP11 and COP/MOP1)

Montréal, Canada, 9 December, 2005

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates, Observers,

We would like to light a candle – the light being a symbol of joy and hope - because first of all we want to celebrate the coming into force of the Kyoto Protocol, this being the first Meeting of the Parties. We also want to celebrate the dedication that so many people and so many countries have shown over these days to make the Kyoto Protocol and the UN Convention on Climate Change a success, by agreeing on the Marrakech Accords and on a working plan on adaptation.

We would like to light a candle because we are thankful for the gift of life - ever so precious and ever so delicate - which for us and other people of faith is a gracious and sacred gift. We are thankful also for the gift of the atmosphere as a precondition of life to all living beings. More

specifically we want to remind us all that we owe a debt to poor and marginalised communities who, by emitting low levels of CO₂, limit the climate impact that would occur if all people were to live the lives of wealthy communities, both in the South and the North. Recognising this debt must lead us to a response of justice. Therefore we plead for a substantial Climate Fund in which people from wealthy communities pay for all their excess emissions above the long term sustainable and per capita equal level, to be used for adaptation and sustainable development in poor communities.

We would like to light a candle because we want to remind us all of the pain and disaster that is already suffered in various regions of the Earth due to climate change; disaster to people – even requiring forced migration - disaster to nature, to creation. Disaster inevitably will occur to future generations due to the already high levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Here we preferentially mention people living in vulnerable living conditions like many Pacific islands, the Arctic and so many more. Also we specifically mention women and children in developing countries who often are first affected by the lack of water, food, fuel and sustainable livelihoods. This brings us to emphasizing once more the need of substantial and immediate adaptation efforts as a sign of solidarity and a consequence of the responsibility people mainly in the North bear for the ongoing climate change.

We would like to light a candle because by burning down the candle we want to remind us all that time is running out. We pray that an agreement may be reached for negotiating equitable and sustainable targets for post-2012. To respect our pledge to prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system – which according to a broad consensus would amount to limiting temperature rise to 2 degrees C – we are at a critical moment now. We have used little over one century to come to this situation of crisis. Radical changes have to take place in order to make the transition to sustainability within the current century. This is the moment to decide on these changes. Let us acknowledge that the use of the atmosphere - being a Global Commons -

has to be shared equally and justly. Let us conclude therefore that we cannot let political power, the market and technology-based economic competition decide on how the use of the atmosphere will be distributed. Therefore we once more point to the Contraction and Convergence Model as a valuable starting point for deliberations and negotiations.

We would like to light a non-fossil fuel candle as an appeal to the non-fossil fuel society that we envisage. To that end, we welcome the tremendous possibilities of science and technology that can be and should be shared graciously, as a crucial contribution to sustainable development all over the world. This can lead to sustainable and just societies that indeed have a significant improvement in the quality of life over what currently exists.

We would like to light a candle as an acknowledgement that what we suffer from is not simply a technological, economic or ecological crisis, but a spiritual crisis. Our situation is the result of valuing the certainty of political power over the certainty of community, solidarity and justice being done to each other; of valuing the certainty of individual control of material wealth over the certainty of enjoying the gifts of nature and friendship. Therefore we ask for guidance to us all in making a transformation to a consciousness of community and enjoying the bounty of nature.

We would like to light a candle because we remember that people have always gathered around the light as a symbol of safety, warmth, community and hope. As representatives of a faith community from all the continents of our world, we ask you and dedicate ourselves to continue to build a community of justice, equity, solidarity and sustainability, as so many of you and us here present have tried to do in these days.

As representatives of a global community - young and old, female and male, black and white, south and north - we invite you to join us in affirming a “Spiritual Declaration on Climate Change” that was issued by almost 2,000 faith community participants at an inter-religious event on Sunday December 4th here in Montreal.



A SPIRITUAL DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

*Made by Faith Community Participants during the
United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP11
and COP/MOP1)*

St. Joseph's Oratory, Montreal December 4, 2005

- We hear the call of the Earth.
- We believe that caring for life on Earth is a spiritual commitment.
- People and other species have the right to life unthreatened by human greed and destructiveness.
- Pollution, particularly from the energy-intensive wealthy industrialised countries, is warming the atmosphere. A warmer atmosphere is leading to major climate changes. The poor and vulnerable in the world and future generations will suffer the most.
- We commit ourselves to help reduce the threat of climate change through actions in our own lives, pressure on governments and industries and standing in solidarity with those most affected by climate change.
- We pray for spiritual support in responding to the call of the Earth.



STATEMENT BY
HIS ALL HOLINESS
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
BARTHOLOMEW
FOR THE WCC WORKING
GROUP ON CLIMATE CHANGE

12 August 2005

Climate change

Although the data regarding climate change is sometimes debated, the seriousness of the situation is generally accepted. Climate change affects everyone. Unless we take radical and immediate measures to reduce emissions stemming from unsustainable – in fact unjustifiable, if not simply unjust – excesses in the demands of our lifestyle, the impact will be both alarming and imminent.

Climate change is much more than an issue of environmental preservation. Insofar as human-induced, it is a profoundly moral and spiritual problem. To persist in the current path of ecological destruction is not only folly. It is no less than suicidal, jeopardizing the diversity of the very earth that we inhabit, enjoy and share. Moreover, climate change constitutes a matter of social and economic justice. For those who will

most directly and severely be affected by climate change will be the poorer and more vulnerable nations (what Christian Scriptures refer to as our “neighbour”) as well as the younger and future generations (the world of our children, and of our children’s children).

There is a close link between the economy of the poor and the warming of our planet. Conservation and compassion are intimately connected. The web of life is a sacred gift of God – ever so precious and ever so delicate. We must serve our neighbour and preserve our world with both humility and generosity, in a perspective of frugality and solidarity alike.

Faith communities must undoubtedly put their own houses in order; their adherents must embrace the urgency of the issue. This process has already begun, although it must be intensified. Religions realize the primacy of the need for a change deep within people’s hearts. They are also emphasizing the connection between spiritual commitment and moral ecological practice. Faith communities are well-placed to take a long-term view of the world as God’s creation. In theological jargon, that is called “eschatology”. Moreover, we have been taught that we are judged on the choices we make. Our virtue can never be assessed in isolation from others, but is always measured in solidarity with the most vulnerable. Breaking the vicious circle of economic stagnation and ecological degradation is a choice, with which we are uniquely endowed at this crucial moment in the history of our planet.





WCC Climate Change Programme - Assessment and Challenges

A report to the 9th WCC Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil (2006)

prepared in the Consultation 'Caring for Creation: an agenda for the World Council of Churches

Basel, Switzerland, May 9-13, 2005

Introduction

The World Council of Churches has been working on climate change ever since 1990. Climate change was identified as one of the most threatening social and ecological issues of our times, affecting Creation as a whole.

At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the WCC Working Group on Climate Change was formed with participation of representatives from each region. This Working Group with some variation in membership has been the facilitator of the WCC's climate change programme ever since. In 1998 the General Assembly in Harare gave a special mandate to the Justice, Peace and Creation (JPC) team to continue the work on climate change through its Working Group.

In the ecumenical understanding, human-induced climate change is being precipitated primarily by the high consumption lifestyles of the richer industrialised nations and wealthy elites throughout the world while the consequences will be experienced disproportionately by impoverished nations, low-lying island states, and future generations. Climate change is thus a matter of international and inter-generational justice.

Despite the achievements of the international negotiation process (the Kyoto Protocol), we confront a situation where the process must prove its viability or face collapse. That is why the work on climate change continues to be of the utmost importance.

Ethical and theological reflection: the atmosphere as a common gift

Life itself being a gift from God, the atmosphere as precondition to the coming into existence and the continuation of life, can be seen as a heavenly gift of loving grace to all life, shared in common by the whole creation. Thanks to this, a subtle balance and interdependence was created between various living organisms and a specific composition of the atmosphere.

In the light of this, protection of the atmosphere is both a moral responsibility and a spiritual answer to the Divine invitation that humanity contribute to the creation of a more inhabitable world. Here spirituality is defined as a practice of living out of gratitude and wonder for the life-sustaining richness of creation, a feeling of deep commitment to all life and to nature as God's creation, and a sincere indignation about all threats to this richness. The churches' commitment to the issue of climate change grows out of the attentive listening to the most vulnerable and marginalized and responds to the prophetic call for justice and transformation. These stories together with the Biblical witness of the God of life urge us to affirm that our moral responsibility must be guided by God's love for life and by principles of justice, accountability, solidarity and sustainability.



The special contribution of the ecumenical work on climate change to the concerted efforts of many actors (scientists, policymakers in governments, business enterprises and NGOs) has been its ethical and moral analysis, informed by the growing consensus on the causes and dynamics of climate change.

The urgency of the threat of climate change requires our generation to take immediate action and go beyond simple declarations and statements. New alternative models of life are called for. We challenge all people to move towards a style of life that derives its quality from the attentive enjoyment of nature and human relationships, from mutual care, dependence, trust and solidarity instead of the illusions of individual autonomy and material wealth, from spirituality and feelings of community, connectedness and intimacy instead of one-dimensional self-centredness. We draw strength from insights gained from the rich, community oriented and simple lifestyles of indigenous and other marginalized communities. We are conscious of the significant contribution these communities, with their low carbon economies, deliver to the stabilization of the climate. We recommend the creation of 'just, participatory, sustainable and sustaining communities' for mutual support and call upon the churches and authorities to join them on this journey with reflection and practical support.

Overview of ecumenical activity on climate change to date

The ecumenical activity on climate change has encompassed ethical and theological reflection on key issues¹; resource development, translation and distribution; advocacy at the international and national levels, including sustained presence at all United Nations negotiations on climate change; regional support for projects primarily in countries of the economic South², and solidarity and accompaniment with churches in areas already experiencing the impact of human-induced climate change.

The World Council of Churches has carried its climate change programme through building networks of engaged people in every region; partnering with member churches, national councils and regional ecumenical organisations in advocacy and project support, including a petition campaign to support agreement on initial reduction targets that finally became the Kyoto Protocol; consulting with scientific, economic, political and technical expertise on climate change within an ethical framework; utilising electronic communication to mobilise and sustain networks; and linking to other interested agencies and organisations within and beyond the ecumenical family.

Challenges and perspectives for the work ahead

Building on the achievements summarized above and due to the continuing and even mounting critical nature of the issue, the WCC Working Group on Climate Change continues its work addressing the following specific challenges:

A. Preventing the Kyoto Protocol from collapsing:

We emphasize that implementation of the Kyoto Protocol is crucial for future steps towards a just and sustainable global climate policy regime. The major challenges before us are to advocate for industrialized countries to meet their targets within the committed timeframe and to reengage those most responsible for emissions into the global treaty process, in order to make it possible for developing countries to adopt appropriate reduction commitments in the next round of negotiations. Other challenges include preventing the Protocol from becoming a totally market based instrument without realizing the real greenhouse gas emission reductions and launching a more concerted effort to provide funds for mitigation and adaptation (in the global South) on the basis of equal rights to the atmosphere and the polluter pays principle.

B. Developing a framework for the period beyond 2012:

We are convinced that a much more principle-based approach is crucial for reaching an effective, equitable and justifiable global climate policy regime after 2012,

which is the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (e.g. principle of equal entitlements; precautionary principle; priority for the poorest/weakest). Scenarios need to be negotiated that might provide for a range of emission limitation commitments for developed and developing countries depending on their level and pace of industrialization while not jeopardizing sustainable development. Looking towards these upcoming negotiations, the basic framework of the Contraction and Convergence Model³ is an important starting point for deliberations and negotiations directed to finding a justice-based global approach to climate change.

C. Increasing focus on adaptation to the impact of climate change: We call for more comprehensive policies supporting adaptation programmes in countries severely affected by climate change, with special attention to the increasing risks related to water resources. In addition the WCC accompanies communities affected by climate change both through ministries of solidarity and presence as well as through practical support of community-based initiatives for adaptation projects and renewable energy systems. Key to support for affected communities on issues related to climate change is the need for a dynamic and intensive collaboration with denominational and ecumenical relief and development agencies. Persons from these communities participate in ecumenical delegations to national, regional and international events where their voices, stories, experiences and recommendations can be pivotal in ecumenical advocacy positions and activities.

D. Transformation of the prevailing economic model: We are convinced that a deeper transformation of the prevailing economic model with its focus on unqualified economic growth combined with the tendency to neglect and deny the destructive effects on people and the earth is required to reach these goals. In the context of this the WCC might intensify its promotion of a shift in energy, industrial and transportation policies particularly in countries with high per-capita consumption, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) up to 80%. Furthermore the WCC should engage in

challenging transnational corporations and international financial institutions to take their responsibility in the necessary economic and technological transformation.

E. Identifying new horizons for the witness and role of the churches: We urge the churches to call publicly for consistent action in implementing the international policy framework on climate change⁴ and to build linkages with related issues. This could include WCC programmes such as the AGAPE process⁵, and JPC focal areas like water, biotechnology, gender and HIV/AIDS. Moreover churches continue to have a role of education and of setting an example both among their members and in society. The development of lived models of an alternative life style that emphasise the value of relationship with the earth, families and community rather than high material consumption levels, are an essential part of this task.

Recommendations

In summary the recommended priority themes for the time to come are:

- Urging the full implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to prevent its collapse: advocating for industrialised countries to meet their targets, reengagement of countries that have left the Kyoto process, and providing adequate funding for mitigation and adaptation activities in the south.
- Supporting and contributing to the development of an equitable and sustainable climate policy framework for the period after 2012, including an increased focus on adaptation to the impacts of climate change.
- Deepening the theological foundations in terms of faith perspectives, ethical implications and spiritual engagement concerning the good life, the meaning of sustainable communities and sustainable livelihoods.
- Intensifying the mobilisation of WCC member churches to be engaged in education with their constituencies, advocacy with government and industry, and practical actions in their own congregations and communities to model a less carbon-intensive lifestyle.

- Creating an international ecumenical climate fund, based on payment by church members for their excess CO2 emissions (above equitable and sustainable levels) and to be used for supporting sustainable development and adaptation in the global South and the shift towards renewable energy in both North and South.
- Intensifying ecumenical and interfaith partnerships with the Roman Catholic Church and other living faiths.
- Linking climate change to other issues such as energy, water, biodiversity, desertification, biotechnology, gender and HIV/AIDS.
- Addressing global economic issues such as globalisation, the role of international financial institutions and transnational corporations and the international debt issue;
- Intensifying collaboration with civil society partners in mutually-supportive campaigns and projects.

Anticipating the forthcoming 9th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 2006 in Porto Alegre, we embrace the theme chosen for this event: "God, in your grace, transform the world". We see our work on climate change as a valuable contribution to this transformation, informed by our faith conviction that life is a gift of God's loving grace and that churches are called to become themselves transformative communities in accompanying those who work for more justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Therefore we call upon the World Council of Churches to continue the support for this work of advocacy, reflection and cooperation.



