



Original

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FOR ACTION

Framework for prioritisation

A progress report

I. Process

In following up the Executive Committee (September 2007) recommendation to review the 2009 plans and to propose at least two scenarios, with a balanced budget, the General Secretary initiated a structured process of prioritization of the programme plans. The process brought together the Programme Directors to reconsider the proposed plans and recommend appropriate changes. Colleagues from the Finance sector and the Income Monitoring and Development sector were involved in the process. It has taken into account the learnings from the internal evaluation of all the projects that was also completed in this period.

II. Framework

II.1. Affirming and sharpening priorities

Based on recommendations and concerns of the Executive Committee, September 2007 the following have been integrated into the core budget 2009.

- The Faith and Order plenary commission as proposed by the Standing Commission.
- Living letters as an important instrument in relationships building, and on the way towards preparing the churches for the IEPC in 2011.
- A reserve for the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in the 2009 budget.
- A reserve in the 2009 budget towards the WCC's contribution to the 2010 Edinburgh celebration.
- A reserve in the 2009 budget towards the next Assembly of the WCC in 2013.
- An increase in the budget for Communication as a first step towards implementing a new strategic plan (cf. Doc. No GEN 09), which is based on decisions of the CC 2006 and the Executive Committee 2007.

II.2 Review of plans to bring greater coherence with redeployment of staff and resources

Integrated in core budget:

- A new Council-wide strategy on relationships with member churches and ecumenical regional partners. Building more synergy between the work in P104 and P401 to develop a more strategic, more realistic, more functional alignment of both human and financial resources.
- New methods of regional co-operation (strengthening the role of REOs, regional theological associations and review of regional consultants on theological education etc.) This will have both strategic and programmatic value.
- More intentional and structural synergies between two projects - the Global Theological Platform to be integrated more into the specific programme area it is to cover each year. For example, in 2008 it will focus on the use of the Bible in the context of crisis and catastrophe (Middle East, Climate Change and HIV and AIDS) and in 2009 on the theological foundations of Advocacy. In 2008 therefore, this will be done with P3 and P4.
- Merger of the projects on Climate and water with the project on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology (P404 with P306), as was recommended by the Central Committee in 2006.
- A Council-wide strategy on visits to the churches to include the Decade to Overcome Violence Living Letters Team visits and the more relational component of all the work. This will be developed closely with the P1 which takes the responsibility for coordination of relationships.
- Reviewing the Scholarships Programme of the WCC.
- A Council-wide strategy to find alternative ways to organize meetings, for example by encouraging churches and other partners to host events or to make contributions to them financially or in kind.

Comment:

- This will lead to a more rational use of staff time and resources.
- Working closely with REO's or delegating activities to regional ecumenical organizations in the region so as to implement activities cooperatively will lead to new ways of deploying staff and resources within the WCC programmes.
- This will make the global platform a more strategic instrument grounding the work in a theological framework as proposed by the Assembly in Porto Alegre. This will lead to savings both in terms of direct programme costs and staff time.
- This will ensure more programmatic coherence and will lead to a saving on staff time.
- This will give greater coherence and will save on the costs.
- This will be done in consultation with ecumenical partners.
- Reduction of costs.

NOTE: *Apart from the above listed projects a process is underway to reduce the number of individual activities. As detailed planning is done after the Central Committee this will be closely monitored and the Executive Committee will receive details on this at its meeting in September 2008.*

II.3 Increase in budgets of projects only depending on income – or keep to 2008 budget:

- EHAIA
- EAPPI
- Ecumenical Theological Education
- Scholarships

II.4 Activities discontinued/postponed:

Urban Rural Mission (URM): After consultation with partners and with the URM Global Representative Group, a process of transition towards independence has been initiated. Financial support for a Consultant will end in January 2009 and the activities can be supported through applications to the Ecumenical Solidarity Fund and will receive grants depending on the quality of the applications.

Multi-Lateral Sharing (MLS): The WCC has played a key role and has successfully helped in the sharing of resources through the instrument of MLS. It has now been decided to transform it into a more dynamic and strategic fund. The Ecumenical Solidarity Fund replaces MLS as a more creative way of relationships building.

Uprooted peoples projects that are funded from the WCC programme funds (**as MLS**) to be discontinued and that work to focus on the ecclesial dimensions of migration.

II.5 Activities “redesigned”:

The former Central Committee had asked that two regional desks be relocated to the region. After evaluating the functioning of the desks and in consultation with the member churches in the two regions, the offices will be closed. The concerns of these two regions will be redesigned and addressed in a different way.

Middle East: A concept is under preparation to develop an overall policy for the Focus on the Middle East which would combine the advocacy work with the relational and diakonal dimensions – expected saving on staff resources and other costs.

Pacific Office: In consultation with the churches in the region, a new methodology of work and relationships is being developed to ensure the voice of the Pacific in the programmes of the WCC, reducing staffing and other costs.

III. Three major challenges:

Besides the immediate results of the exercise, three major challenges were powerfully confirmed:

- a. The imperative to become more “strategic” therefore to bring to the executive and central committees for discussion, guidance and final approval two new and workable strategies on:
 - Communication. (cf. Doc No. GEN 09)
 - Fund Raising. (cf. Doc. No. GEN 10)

- b. The imperative to deal with two fundamental dilemmas: on “how to responsibly postpone or even suspend activities without damaging the WCC’s responsiveness to member churches and the wider ecumenical constituency?” and; on “how to reach a harmonious balance between increasing income and reducing programmatic activities?”
- c. The imperative to work on a process for long term proposals on:
 - ***Governing Bodies***: their overall architecture to be assessed, particularly with a critical eye on their size and frequency of meetings. Such a step could bring results in clarifying and strengthening the roles of the governing bodies, but also result in possible cost savings
 - ***The role and specific identity of the WCC***, particularly given the latest developments within the ecumenical landscape after the first meeting of the Global Christian Forum and the formation of ACT Alliance. (cf. the Report of the General Secretary Doc. No GEN 02).

These challenges are being discussed and will be considered in the next steps in the process of prioritization.

IV. Financial results and prospects:

Preliminary results which will have to be examined by the Finance Committee will be communicated to the Programme Committee at the joint meeting so that the Programme Committee can fulfil its task.

V. What next?

This process will be continued after the CC. Any follow-up will be worked out and presented to the Officers in May 2008 and the actual budget will come to the Executive Committee in September 2008, for final approval.

Suggested Actions:

The Programme Committee recommends to the CC:

- a. to authorize the changes in the 2009 plans which correspond to the proposal for changes. (Doc. No. GEN/PRO 03)
- b. to encourage the General Secretary to work further on the long term proposals for both appropriate structural changes and the use of human and financial resources to ensure that the WCC can position itself within the ecumenical movement in the 21st Century.
- c. to instruct the core group of the programme committee to work further, in cooperation with the officers of the finance committee, towards presenting a final proposal to the executive committee in September 2008.