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FOR INFORMATION

Actions on Public Issues

The following actions have been taken on public issues since the last meeting of the central committee (30 August – 6 September 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland):

AFRICA

2006

26 October Letter from the World Council of Churches acting general secretary to H.E. Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, President of the **Republic of South Africa** sending the prayers of the members of the WCC to Mr Mbeki and to the National Civil Society HIV and AIDS Prevention and Treatment Congress – “Building Solidarity – An Action Plan to Save Lives” as it begins its deliberations this week.

2007

26 January Letter from the World Council of Churches general secretary to Rt Rev. Dr. Mvume Dandala, General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) on the occasion of the Conference on Muslim Christian Leaders Peace Initiative on **Somalia**, held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania on 3-4 February 2007. The WCC remains strongly committed to engagement and dialogue between faith communities on issues and in struggles for justice and peace. The general secretary acknowledged that AACC has taken a significant step forward in promoting inter-religious dialogue for peace in Somalia and sends the prayers and full support of the WCC for the success of this meeting and for a future culture of peace in Somalia.

27 Feb – 2 Mar Statement on the **Situation in the Horn of Africa** adopted by the executive committee expressing concerns at the deteriorating human rights situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea; supporting the transitional federal government (TFG) in its efforts to bring services to the people of Somalia and to build the institutions that are needed to promote stability, democracy, rule of law and development; welcoming efforts by the Sudanese government towards reconciliation in the east of the country following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as well as the signing of a truce agreement between the Lord’s Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda and urges both parties to resume the stalled peace

16 – 19 May Follow-up action on the executive committee (February 2007) statement on the **Situation in the Horn of Africa**:
WCC delegation, including the general secretary, visited **Eritrea** where they met with church representatives and President Isaias Afewerki of the country. During their meetings they affirmed the WCC’s commitment to churches engaged in peace, reconciliation and nation-building efforts and identified ways in which the council can contribute to the process.

- 1 – 3 July A WCC delegation, including the general secretary, visited **Tanzania** where he proclaimed that “today, in order to fight poverty, Africa needs to mobilize similar efforts to those rallied against colonialism”. The delegation met with church leaders and visited the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.
- 25 – 28 Sept Follow-up action to the **Vulnerable populations at risk: Statement on the Responsibility to Protect** adopted at the WCC 9th Assembly (Feb 2006):
Minute on **Darfur** adopted by the executive committee, calling on member churches: to bring to their government’s attention the “international responsibility to protect people at risk in the Darfur region of Sudan and in neighbouring Chad”; to “provide humanitarian aid to Darfur through Action by Churches Together International”; to “make fact-finding and solidarity visits to the region”; and to keep the people of the region in their prayers.
- 2008**
- 2 January The WCC general secretary issued a statement expressing great concern that the outcome of recent elections had descended into violence. He called on the leaders of the two major political parties in **Kenya** to “turn urgently from partisan postures and negotiate in good faith to reach a non-violent, political solution”. He also called on the churches of Kenya to do their part in ensuring the common good of all by fulfilling their role of “ensuring respect for human life and seeking reconciliation between neighbours”. He assured the people and churches of Kenya that the WCC “stands ready to support the process of dialogue and reconciliation that is now necessary”, both in solving the present problem and in clarifying long standing electoral issues.
- 9 January The WCC general secretary issued a statement in response to signs over the past week that the situation in **Kenya** had improved. He welcomed the actions taken by leaders of the top two political parties to diffuse tensions and called on them to continue moving towards dialogue. He praised the churches of Kenya and other religious leaders in Africa for the important role they played in the peacemaking. He finished with an appeal to churches around the world to continue praying for the Kenyan people and churches.
- 16 January Letter from the WCC general secretary to the Heads of WCC member churches in **Kenya** expressing our concern and assuring them of our support following the recent violence. He said that our tangible support is demonstrated through two public statements, the mobilization of resources through ACT International and the setting up of a Living Letters visit for the end of this month. He expressed hope that the worst was over, that the situation would continue to improve and that, “the churches will play an important part in speeding up that time when...the Kenyan people will continue to live in peace and harmony”.

ASIA/PACIFIC

2006

- 10 October Follow-up action on the central committee (September 2006) statement on extra-judicial killings in the **Philippines**:
Letter from the World Council of Churches acting general secretary to the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and to WCC member churches in the Philippines expressing shock and grief and offering condolences to the family at the brutal stabbing of Bishop Alberto Ramento, of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente. The WCC condemned the extra-judicial killings in the Philippines and committed to continue monitoring them and to acting with

partners in bringing these atrocities to the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

- 18 October Letter from the World Council of Churches acting general secretary to Rev. Dr Richard Daulay, general secretary of the Communion of Churches in **Indonesia** (CCI) expressing shock and dismay and offering condolences to the family at the murder of Rev. Irianto Kongholi MTh, general secretary of the Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah. The WCC supported the call of the executive board of the CCI to the government to address the causes of tension and conflicts between the Christian and Muslim communities.
- 6 December Statement of solidarity from the World Council of Churches general secretary to the **Fiji** Council of Churches and the Assembly of Christian Churches in Fiji on the occasion of the military coup in their country. The WCC appealed to the military leadership in Fiji to restore the democratic process before further damage, as the result of division and confrontation, is done to the country and its people.
- 2007**
- 20 April Follow-up action on the central committee (September 2006) statement on the **conflict in Sri Lanka**:
The general secretary of the WCC expressed concern regarding the deteriorating situation in **Sri Lanka**. He appealed to the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to return to the obligations of the cease fire agreement and to seek durable solutions to end the fighting that is affecting the lives of so many people, and encouraged the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to reach a settlement of the ethnic conflicts and put an end to the violence through dialogue and negotiations.
- 24 July Letter to the National Council of Churches in **Korea** regarding the 23 Korean hostages held in Afghanistan, praying for their immediate release and reunification with their families.
- 4 – 14 August Follow-up action on the central committee (Sept 2006) statement on the **conflict in Sri Lanka**, as well as preparatory action towards the **International Ecumenical Peace Convocation** (May 2011):
A “Living Letters” ecumenical team visit to Sri Lanka took place sponsored by the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence project. The team found out more about the churches efforts and needs and reported back to the wider ecumenical family.
- 14 August In a gesture of support, the WCC general secretary met with families of the **Korean** Christian humanitarian workers being held by the Taliban in Afghanistan. He was accompanied by the general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Korea, Rev. Kwon Oh-sung.
- 30 August The WCC general secretary sent a message to the **Pacific Conference of Churches** 9th Assembly. He underlined the “new challenges to political stability, environmental well-being and economic and cultural autonomy” in the region and expressed hope that the Pacific churches could “coordinate strategies to address the critical issues within the region”.
- 31 August Letter of joy and thanksgiving from WCC general secretary to the National Council of Churches in **Korea’s** general secretary, Rev. Kwon Oh-sung, on the release of 21 hostages in Afghanistan. He also noted the continued prayers of Christians

throughout the world for the family and friends of the two hostages who lost their lives.

- 1 October The WCC general secretary sent a letter of congratulations to Metropolitan **Dr. Joseph Mar Irenaeus**, the new head of the Mar Thoma Church, on his enthronement. In his letter he mentioned, "Your commitment and passion for peace and reconciliation efforts and your deep involvement in peace monitoring missions in conflict and violence affected areas in North East India, Sri Lanka and Cambodia have been appreciated and valued by the ecumenical family."
- 22 October Letter from the WCC general secretary to WCC executive committee members about the actions being taken with regards to the situation in **Myanmar** and his decision (after consulting with church leaders there) not to issue a public statement. Instead, it was decided that he would bring up the issue during his meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon later in the month and that the idea of receiving a delegation from Myanmar, as well as sending an ecumenical delegation, would be explored further. A consultation for ecumenical advocacy for Myanmar has since been scheduled to take place in December.
- 21 November Follow-up action on the central committee (September 2006) statement on extra-judicial killings in the **Philippines**:
 During a press conference in Manila, the WCC general secretary expressed concern at the worsening human rights situation in the Philippines and announced stronger ecumenical advocacy efforts to put pressure on the Philippine government. He condemned the practice by the government and military of treating church, pastors and church workers who work for human rights as subversives or communists. He announced that the WCC would bring victims of human rights abuses in the Philippines to the upcoming session of the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council.

EUROPE 2006

- 13 December Letter from the World Council of Churches general secretary to H.E. Mrs Micheline Calmy-Rey, President of the **Swiss Confederation** and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs congratulating her on her election to the post of president of the Swiss Confederation and expressing appreciation at her past roles at the new Human Rights Council, facilitating the Geneva Accord and her support to the WCC's Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel.

2007

- 9 March Letter to the member churches of the WCC in the **United Kingdom** in view of the Trident nuclear weapons decision that was nearing a key vote in the parliament of the UK.
- 16 March Letter to **Rt. Hon. Tony Blair** in relation to the bicentennial anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, reminding him that people of African descent in diaspora and in Africa are still awaiting an unambiguous apology and clear sign from European nations that acknowledges their participation in colonial history, and encouraging for a process of truth telling, repentance and reconciliation in order to promote an honest and open dialogue in relation to the scars left on the people as a part of the colonial legacy.
- 24 March The moderator of the WCC central committee conveyed a message of congratulations to the **Lutheran World Federation** on their 60th anniversary. The message called for continued work together between the two organizations on urgent

issues facing churches today, including globalization and economic injustice, HIV/AIDS and human rights violations.

- 30 April – 1 May During a visit to the **Irish School of Ecumenics**, the WCC general secretary gave a public lecture on “Hope and the healing of memories”, as well as responded to a lecture on “Prisoner abuse: from Abu Ghraib to the passion of the Christ”. He stressed that having been through the most violent century in human history, humanity needs healing and reconciliation more than ever and that the church should take the lead to help people of all faiths”.
- 7 May Tribute to **Prof. Dr Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker**, who gave a decisive impetus to the Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation which brought churches and people together across the divisions of the cold war during the final two decades of the last century. As a nuclear physicist, he took a public stance against nuclear weapons.
- 10 May Ecumenical gathering of more than 12,000 Christians, European church leaders and politicians, **“Together for Europe 2007”**, was co-moderated by a WCC president. The WCC general secretary sent a message to the participants acknowledging that the meeting brought to the European forefront issues of redefining boundaries, climate change, water scarcity, the loss of biodiversity, and the moral obligation of mediating wars and conflicts and of receiving refugees and migrants from former colonized countries.
- 29 May – 2 June The WCC general secretary visited **Latvia & Estonia**. During his visit he met with top government officials of both countries as well as church leaders where discussions centred on the role of churches and the ecumenical challenges (namely economic globalization and reconciliation and healing) in secularized, post-communist societies who had recently regained independence.
- 5 September The WCC general secretary spoke about unity among churches in Europe transcending the common economic and political future at the opening session of the **Third European Ecumenical Assembly**. He called for European churches to speak with one voice for all members of an integrated Europe as well as for the millions of immigrants now living in Europe.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

2006

- 6 November Joint letter from the World Council of Churches programme executive for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Lutheran World Federations (LWF) Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean to Bishop Medardo Gómez of the Salvadorian Lutheran Church of **El Salvador** expressing condemnation at the murders of Francisco and Jesús Carrillo, a couple that served as pastors of said church. The WCC and LWF call on the authorities of El Salvador to undertake a speedy and accurate investigation and to bring those responsible before justice and offer prayers to the Salvadorian Lutheran Church as it continues in its witness for reconciliation and peace.

2007

- 23 May Letter of WCC general secretary to Hon. Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State, United States of America, and to Rev. Robert Edgar, general secretary of the NCCC in the USA, regarding **Cuban** citizens imprisoned in the US.
- 13 December Letter from the WCC general secretary to the President of **Brazil**, Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, in response to a hunger strike by the Roman Catholic Bishop Luiz Cappio,

who was protesting the São Francisco River diversion project which entails both ecological and social consequences for the people of north-eastern Brazil. He resumed his hunger strike after two years of attempts at dialogue with the government failed. The letter expresses solidarity with Bishop Cappio and calls for the withdrawal of the Brazilian army from the project's construction site and for the re-establishment of dialogue between social movements, churches and the government.

2008

14 January

The director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs issued a statement "sharing in the joy" of the release of two women held hostage by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of **Columbia** (FARC) for about six years. She congratulated the International Committee of the Red Cross and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez for their role in the mediation process and called on the government of Columbia and FARC to look for peaceful ways to end the conflict. She said the hostages' release was a "sign of hope" that shows that a negotiated solution to finally end the decades of violence and overcome the current stalemate is possible. She applauded the efforts made by churches in Colombia and civil society in general to find a peaceful means to bring justice and reconciliation to the country.

MIDDLE EAST

2006

29 September

Letter from the World Council of Churches general secretary to HE Mr Ehud Olmert, Prime Minister of the **State of Israel** conveying the deep concern of the World Council of Churches and request remedial action at the long delay by the government of Israel in recognizing His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus III as the head of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The WCC called for the prompt and unqualified recognition of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus III as the primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem by the Government of Israel.

17 October

Letter from the Commission of Churches on International Affairs acting director to H.H. Patriarch Ignatius Zakka Iwas of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East offering condolences at the murder of Father Boulos Iskander in **Iraq**. The WCC called on the Iraqi police and the coalition forces to ensure that every possible step is taken to secure the safety and protection of all human lives in Iraq.

14 December

Statement by the Commission of Churches on International Affairs acting director on the "**Week of impunity**" in the Middle East. The statement cited three recent incidents/events as examples of impunity and disregard of harmful consequences of ones action. These are the denial of entry by the government of Israel to UN representative Bishop Desmond Tutu to investigate human rights violations in Gaza; the holding of an international conference questioning the holocaust by Tehran and the Israeli prime minister's proclamation that his country is amongst the legitimate nuclear powers.

30 December

Statement by the World Council of Churches general secretary on the execution of the deposed Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein. The WCC reiterated its opposition to the death penalty and called on all parties and authorities in **Iraq** to work to stay the hands of those who are tempted to use violence for political gain and all who put themselves above the law.

2007

15 January

The WCC welcomed a statement issued by several **Jerusalem** church leaders calling for Palestinian factions to stop fighting each other and to focus on the priority of a

need for peace with justice based on United Nations resolutions. Most of the 13 leaders who submitted the statement were from WCC member churches.

- 15 March Statement of the general secretary of the World Council of Churches on the fourth anniversary of the war in **Iraq**, calling on WCC member churches to pray and intercede on behalf of the people of Iraq, before God, that the war forced upon them may come to an end and that peace with justice and dignity may prevail for all the people of Iraq.
- 1 May Letter from the WCC general secretary to the permanent mission of **Turkey** to the United Nations office at Geneva, in response to the murder of three Christians on 18 April. It asked that the Turkish government take steps to see that justice was done in those cases, but also that further crimes against religious minorities be prevented by ensuring the respect for human rights and the rule of law are enforced.
- 18 May Letter to the prime minister of **Jordan**, Dr Marouf Suleiman al-Bakhit regarding the government's decision to not recognize His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine, who was the legally elected, and asking the government to reconsider its decision so that peace and harmony within the church would prevail again.
- 1 June Letter to the heads of churches and Christian communities in **Jerusalem** explaining to them that churches all around the world were organizing prayers, seminars and advocacy events on Sunday, 3 June 2007, in response to the call for a united witness, raising awareness in churches, in society and with their governments concerning the urgency of new efforts to end the occupation and to work for peace with justice.
- 18 - 20 June The **Amman Call**, made by representatives of Christian churches and church-related organizations from every corner of the earth, launched the "Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum" as an instrument to "catalyze and co-ordinate new and existing church advocacy for peace, aimed at ending the illegal occupation in accordance with UN resolutions, and demonstrate its commitment to inter-religious action for peace and justice that serves all the peoples of the region."
- 29 August Letter to His All Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople as a sign of support regarding the recent decision of the supreme court of appeals and subsequent acts by judicial authorities in **Turkey** which have again challenged the Patriarchate's long-established use of the title 'Ecumenical'.
- 25 – 28 Sept Statement on **Iraq and its Christian Communities** adopted by the executive committee, calling on the members of the WCC to engage "their own governments over the need to break the international silence on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and to provide greater assistance to displaced and refugee Iraqis", saying that "the [grave] suffering of the Iraqi people remains largely unrecognized and unresolved". Specifically, it called for a "joint Christian-Muslim advocacy overseas for tolerance and co-existence in Iraq"; member churches to keep the people of Iraq in their prayers; increased assistance to a society in great need; supporting displaced people inside Iraq and Iraqi refugees abroad; and raising awareness in their parishes and countries concerning the plight of the Iraqi people.
- 25 – 28 Sept Minute on **Iran and the Middle East Regional Crisis** adopted by the executive committee, stating that "resolving these regional problems is essential for ending the current spiral of violence in Iraq, Lebanon and Israel/Palestine". Unless these issues are addressed, the conflicts in the region, and those around the world pertaining to

the region, will continue. The minute called on member churches to “press their governments that the US and its allies must settle the dispute over Iran’s nuclear programme through negotiations and not through the use of military force...that negotiations must include Iranian compliance with international directives and...that negotiated solutions are the only path to peace for the Middle East and for a world increasingly destabilized by the regional crisis there”. It also stresses that the churches seek protection for “all populations involved” and calls for the withdrawal of all US forces from Iraq.

- 26 November Letter welcoming **Annapolis meeting on Peace in the Middle East** and hoping for its success is sent by WCC general secretary to the United States Secretary of State, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, and the President of Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas. In the letter he stressed that the three criteria for success were good faith, multilateral participation and adherence to the rule of law. He mentioned the reality of past consultations having been counter-productive and said that “to meet and fail in the same manner yet again is, deeply and dangerously irresponsible”.
- 29 November The WCC UN Liaison Office representative in New York spoke on behalf of the International Coordinating Network on Palestine during the observation of the **International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**. He denounced the ongoing failure of the international community to stand with the Palestinian people in ending the occupation and securing their right to return. He said that this failure also impeded the peace, justice, security and rights that the international community had sought to uphold for Israelis.
- Ongoing Follow-up action on the executive committee (Sept 2007) minute on **Iran and the Middle East Crisis** and statement on **Christian communities in Iraq**:
Associated Press reported on both documents with considerable pick-up. Copies were sent directly to networks and partners involved in Middle East advocacy and churches in the region, as well as being shared in person as meetings take place with member church leaders and counterpart agencies. They were shared with participants at **UN Advocacy Week** and presented to the **United States Mission to the United Nations**. These uses and use with governments will continue.

NORTH AMERICA

2006

- 6 December Letter from the World Council of Churches general secretary to Hon. Jeb Bush, governor of the **State of Florida**, appealing to the Governor to grant clemency to the death sentence of the Puerto Rican national, Mr Ángel Nieves Díaz, who was scheduled to be executed 13 December, and asking him to review the case. The WCC expressed the unconditional opposition of its members to the death penalty and its responsibility to promote strict adherence to the international rule of law and international human rights standards.

2007

- 9 – 12 March Staff from the WCC United Nations Liaison Office in New York participated in the fifth annual **Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington D.C.** The aim of those days was to strengthen the ecumenical movement through a process of raising the awareness and voices of US Christians on the way their country’s policy impacts around the world.
- 16 April Statement by WCC general secretary regarding the 33 people who were shot at the **Virginia Tech University** on 15 April 2007, and underlying that one of the major

obstacles to effective global regulation of small arms and light weapons is the pro-gun position adopted by the US administration during years of international negotiations.

- 14 – 24 Sept Preparatory action towards the **International Ecumenical Peace Convocation** (May 2011):
 “Living Letters” ecumenical team visit to the United States sponsored by the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence project. The team found out more about the churches efforts and needs and reported back to the wider ecumenical family.

CLIMATE CHANGE

2006

- 17 November Statement from the World Council of Churches Working Group on Climate Change, Climate Justice for All, delivered to the high-level ministerial segment of the **UN Climate Change Conference COP12/MOP2**. The statement called for delegates of COP12/MOP2 to address the reality of climate change with the urgency it deserves, for governments of industrialized countries to implement the steps put forth in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and in the Kyoto Protocol and to reimburse less industrialized nations for the ecological debt they owe, and for all countries to participate in a climate policy framework for post 2012.

2007

- 2 February The World Council of Churches programme on climate change and water welcomed a report issued by the **UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** presenting overwhelming scientific consensus on the damage caused by greenhouse gas emissions. The WCC programme executive for climate change called on the global debate to shift from denial and delays to responsibility and remedies.
- 20 February The WCC general secretary endorsed the release of a statement by the **Global Roundtable on Climate Change**, a group representing the corporate world, civil, religious and educational institutions. He called the statement “urgently needed” and marvelled at the unprecedented number of companies and organizations around the world who also endorsed it.
- 12 – 15 April The WCC co-sponsored a meeting of church-related relief and development agencies to renew and update common ecumenical advocacy positions and policy in relation to intergovernmental negotiation on climate change in the next round of **UNFCCC COP 13** climate change negotiations in Bali in December and in preparation of the 2012 first commitment period expiration of the Kyoto protocol. They also reviewed plans for a proposed global civil society campaign on climate change that faith communities along with environmental organizations plan on launching later this year.
- 25 – 28 Sept Statement on the **10th Anniversary of the Kyoto Protocol** adopted by the executive committee, saying that the Kyoto Protocol is “an important step forward towards a just and sustainable global climate policy regime” and as such should be fully implemented, but that “much more radical reductions [of greenhouse gases] are urgently needed”. It also called on all states to fully implement the provisions or to meet targets as strict; all states to adopt “more comprehensive policies to support adaptation and mitigation programmes in countries severely affected by climate change”, namely those in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific regions; all states to implement a principle based approach after 2012; and churches, church-related agencies and ecumenical bodies to “strengthen their commitment and to foster their co-operation with regard to climate change”.

- 14 December Follow-up action on the executive committee (Sept 2007) statement on the **10th Anniversary of the Kyoto Protocol**:
 The WCC ecumenical delegation to the **UNFCCC COP 13** conference made an address entitled “This far and no further: Act fast and act now!”. The statement called for a change of paradigm where the “operative principles are ethics, justice, equity, solidarity, human development and environmental conservation”, stressing the moral responsibility of peoples of faith to act as a catalyst in this change process. It also called for the adoption of legal mechanisms to enforce the actions needed to be followed by all countries in order to begin to adequately combat climate change.

ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

2006

- 16 October Statement issued by the World Council of Churches acting general secretary congratulating Mr Muhammad Yunus on receiving the award of the **Nobel Peace Prize 2006**, thanking him on his efforts at supporting just trade through innovative micro credit initiatives and wishing him well in his future work.

2007

- 18 May The WCC acting general secretary called for reform of International Financial Institutions following the resignation of **World Bank** President, Paul Wolfowitz. In his statement he stresses that “reforms that ensure a greater representation and more effective voice for the developing countries must be set in place now”.

- 5 – 9 November Follow-up action to the **Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth (AGAPE)** process approved at WCC 9th Assembly (Feb 2006):
 First of five regional church encounters to be held over the next six years on different continents was held in **Tanzania**. It brought together people of faith from Africa and beyond to work on ecumenical strategies and actions for addressing the interlinked problems of poverty, excessive wealth and ecological degradation.

- 6 December Follow-up action on the central committee (September 2006) statement on **Just Trade**:
 Letter from the WCC general secretary to the head of the **European Commission for External Trade**, Peter Mandelson, expressing concern about the ongoing pressure exerted by the European Union (EU) on African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries to sign interim Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) by 31 December 2007. In the letter he states that “negotiations between EU and ACP countries should not be based on pressure and threats but on fairness that serves to redress historical and structural links between the EU and ACP countries”. The WCC called for “adequate time to be allocated to ACP countries for appropriate discussion of EPAs in their parliaments so as to hear the voices of the people in these countries”.

ECUMENICAL WATER NETWORK

2007

- 21 – 25 May Follow-up action on the 9th assembly (Feb 2006) statement on **Water for Life**:
 The Ecumenical Water Network – housed and partly staffed in the WCC – organized a conference, “**Churches for Water in Africa**”, in cooperation with the Uganda Joint Christian Council, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development, and opened by Uganda’s minister of water and environment. The statement issued at the end of the meeting called for a “holistic approach” to water issues,

stressed the importance of the role churches must play, and emphasized that access to water is a human right. It explored how churches can address the political, social and economic conditions that underlie water access problems

GENETICS AND BIOTECHNOLOGIES

2007

2 – 5 December A **Global Consultation on Genetics and New Biotechnologies** and the ministry of the church was held in South Africa, stemming from a combined initiative, which included the WCC. The outcome of the consultation was summarized in an aide-memoire as “diversity expressed as solidarity”. The consultation called for a restoration of the churches’ prophetic voices and public witness in the growing debate regarding the ethical use of genetics and biotechnologies.

HIV/AIDS

2007

4 – 7 July Follow-up action on the central committee (Sept 2006) statement on **HIV/AIDS**: WCC general secretary participated on a panel convened by the Young Women’s Christian Association and the International Community of Women living with AIDS at the **International Women’s Summit about HIV/AIDS** calling for a “Christ-centred approach with love as its language”.

HUMAN RIGHTS

2007

5 – 7 December International consultation “**Towards protection of human rights and human dignity amidst conflicts**”, was called together by the WCC, where 40 participants from across the globe gathered in Geneva. The consultation discussed ecumenical strategy for advocacy at UN human rights bodies, with stress being placed on the fact that because 2008 is the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the opportunities for churches to revitalize their efforts at protecting and promoting human dignity will be numerous.

INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS AND DIALOGUE

2007

7 June WCC general secretary delivered a keynote lecture at the **German Kirchentag** on “How Can Religions Live Together?” In his speech he emphasized the role of globalization in current ethno-religious conflicts, saying that the current upsurge in new forms of religious fundamentalism is “a form of collective resistance against cultural hegemony in the context of globalization”. He also called on the need to acknowledge past chapters of Christian mission history in order to improve relations between religions today.

27 September The WCC UN Liaison Office representative in New York participated on a panel during a discussion (co-sponsored by the WCC) between Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and about 140 people of faith from across the United States. This discussion was called in an effort to promote dialogue as an alternative to possible military confrontation between **Iran and the United States**.

15 October The WCC general secretary publicly welcomed a letter addressed to a number of world Christian leaders from some 140 **Muslim leaders** entitled, “A Common Word between Us and You”. He called it “unprecedented in its unity of purpose and gives hope for what people of faith can achieve together”. He said the WCC was ready to participate in putting together a concrete process to implement the suggestions put forth in the letter.

JUST AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

2007

10 – 14 Dec A statement challenging churches to look at their own past complicity in the evil of slavery and the slave trade and calling on them to be at the forefront of exposing modern forms of slavery and oppression of people based on caste, race, gender or economic status was issued at the end of an international conference, co-sponsored by the WCC, entitled **“Abolished but not Destroyed: Remembering the Slave Trade in the 21st Century”**.

MIGRATION

2007

25 April The WCC general secretary gave a speech at a meeting of the Churches Together in Wales and its Commission for Racial Equality on **“Global migration and new ecclesial realities”**. He stressed that global migration poses new challenges to churches worldwide and urged them to increase their capacity to practice hospitality in this era of new migrants and “new forms of migration”. He called on the responsibility of churches to inform public opinion about the realities faced by migrants in their countries of origin and said that migration should challenge churches “to overcome...injustice, discrimination and contempt.”

6 – 8 June The **Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM)** met in Nairobi, where it was opened by Kenya’s minister for migration and hosted by the AACC. GEM was formed by the WCC to engage and challenge churches in their work with migrants and to understand global migration better. Migration in today’s world raises questions about inter-faith relations, identity, justice, racism, advocacy and diakonia and affects the contexts in which churches live.

6 – 9 July Representatives of African, European and Middle Eastern churches, church-related organizations and ecumenical bodies working on migration issues and associated with the World Council of Churches held a meeting to discuss migration in and between those regions. The meeting ended with a statement to the **Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)**, welcoming its creation as an avenue to explore new initiatives for international cooperation and partnerships and providing several recommendations on how to make the GFMD a success, including developing a “coherent and binding body of international rights of migrants”.

PEACE AND DISARMAMENT

2006

6 October Letters from the World Council of Churches general secretary to: H.E. Ambassador Alberto Dumont, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations; H.E. Ambassador Caroline Millar, Permanent Representative of Australia to the Conference on Disarmament; H.E. Ambassador Luis Varela Quiros, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations; H.E. Ambassador Yoshiki Mine, Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament; H.E. Ambassador Kari Kahiluoto, Permanent Representative of Finland to the Conference on Disarmament; H.E. Ambassador Amina Mohammed, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations; and HE Ambassador John S. Duncan, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Conference on Disarmament. The WCC expressed its gratitude to these countries for sponsoring the **draft resolution on the control of conventional arms** at the first committee of the UN general assembly and asked them to continue increasing their efforts to effect positive change.

- 9 October Letter from the World Council of Churches general secretary to the five member states of the United Nations Security Council as well as to: Ambassador Pak Gil Yon, Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations; Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations; and Ambassador Young-jin Choi Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, calling on all to ensure that the **nuclear weapons crisis in north-east Asia** is resolved politically through the negotiated settlement of grievances among the parties concerned and that it is resolved legally by a determined and general movement of States into the spirit and the letter of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and related treaties under the auspices of the United Nations.
- 27 November Minute on the **Elimination of Nuclear Arms** from the Commission of Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) acting director to World Council of Churches Member Churches whose nations are members of the United Nations and (in all but four cases) part of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); REOs, NCCs, the CCIA commission; and to participants in the International Affairs Advocacy Week at the United Nations in New York. The WCC called on governments to take collective responsibility for the enforcement of international nuclear disarmament mechanisms and to pursue the complete elimination of nuclear weapons under the terms of the NPT and offers support to the churches and related organizations in their advocacy efforts.
- 2007**
- 15 February Statement by the WCC general secretary welcoming as a "major breakthrough" the agreement reached at the **Six Party Talks** (U.S., Russia, China, Japan and the two Koreas) in Beijing where the Democratic People's Republic of Korea committed itself to take initial steps towards denuclearization in return for energy and economic aid.
- 27 Feb– 2 March Statement on the **Need for Churches' Vigilance Against Nuclear Proliferation** adopted by the executive committee reaffirming the churches' consistent call for the abolition of nuclear weapons, urging the UK government to set an historic example of leadership for the whole international community by fulfilling its disarmament obligations under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, calling on churches to support the strengthening of the existing international mechanisms of verification and compliance, and appealing to the churches in the United States and China to persuade their governments to end their disagreement on a program of work and resolve the stalemate in the conference on disarmament.
- 17 – 20 May WCC staff responsible for the Middle East, DOV and for women gave presentations at the international ecumenical conference on **"Forgiveness, peace and reconciliation"**. Discussions centred on peace, justice and security and how they relate to religion, spirituality and healing.
- 9 August Follow-up action on the executive committee (February 2007) statement **against nuclear proliferation**:
The WCC general secretary proposed a parallel meeting of churches from nations involved in the **Six Party Talks** – including churches from Canada, Scandinavia and the European Union – at the next round of talks. The recommendation was made during a speech given at the 100th Anniversary Conference of the Great Korean Revival. The Korean churches endorsed the proposal in a written statement and asked the WCC to facilitate the parallel meeting.

- 21 September Follow-up action on the meeting between the WCC general secretary and **UN Secretary General** in 2004:
International Day of Prayer for Peace coordinated by DOV and coinciding with the United Nations International Day of Peace.
- 1 – 4 October Preparatory action towards the **International Ecumenical Peace Convocation** (May 2011):
Consultation on **“Healing of Memories – Reconciling Communities”** co-sponsored by WCC. The consultation assessed best practices from five case studies and sought to establish a summary or manual that would help churches, civil society groups and policy makers to understand the needs and options of community healing.
- 23 October The WCC general secretary took part in a panel discussion on **“Faiths, War and Peace”** at an interfaith dialogue for peace organized by the Sant’Egidio Catholic community. The dialogue brought together such people as Pope Benedict XVI, the chief rabbi of Israel, Yona Metzger, as well as the presidents of several countries. The general secretary mentioned three major threats to world peace today, “nuclear proliferation, climate change and the threat of deepening injustices”. He emphasized the positive role religion can play in “forg(ing) common visions and goals for the sake of life”.
- 16 December The WCC general secretary spoke at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington D.C. on the question of **“Can churches be peacemakers in a world racked by violence?”** He said that the church must be a leader in peacemaking and reconciliation in order for it to properly minister to the world as Christ had called the church to do.

UNITED NATIONS

2006

- 16 October Letter from the World Council of Churches general secretary to H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon, **Secretary-General Elect of the United Nations** congratulating him on his election and extending an invitation to meet with him in the new year. The WCC calls on the participation of civil society and faith communities in the work of the UN stressing that the role of religions and religious organizations in addressing issues of security, human rights, development and the growing interplay between religion and politics should be taken note of.

2007

- 27 Feb – 2 Mar Statement on the **United Nations Peacebuilding Commission** adopted by the executive committee appreciating the establishment of the peace-building commission that will mobilize and channel resources at the disposal of the international community to advise and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict recovery, and urging member churches to encourage and support the efforts of the peacebuilding commission, in post-conflict situations, in strengthening the links between peace and security, democracy and good governance.
- 19 March Follow-up action on the central committee (September 2006) statement on extra-judicial killings in the **Philippines**:
The WCC co-sponsored an ecumenical delegation from the Philippines within the framework of the **UN Human Rights Council** meeting in Geneva. The delegation delivered a report and put forth a call to action documenting human rights violations in the Philippines.

- 14 - 23 May The WCC facilitated a delegation of 134 individuals from 33 countries and six workshops at the **60th World Health Assembly** in Geneva. The delegation presented three statements pertaining to issues under discussion, including one in support of the rational use of medicine.
- 24 September Follow-up action on the central committee (September 2006) statement on extra-judicial killings in the **Philippines**:
The WCC, in partnership with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development, Asian Human Rights Commission and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, submitted an oral intervention at the **United Nations Human Rights Council**, asking them to prevail upon the Philippine government to curb extrajudicial killings.
- 29 October The WCC general secretary met with the **UN Secretary General** at the beginning of the 3rd Annual UN Advocacy Week in New York. During the meeting the two reaffirmed their commitment to strong and close collaboration. The WCC general secretary brought up some of the issues on the churches' advocacy agenda: Horn of Africa, nuclear disarmament, peace in the Middle East, and overcoming poverty and economic injustice. He also announced the WCC's intention to propose that the UN declare a "Decade of Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace". The proposal would be submitted to the UN in the course of the coming year.

OTHER 2007

- 20 – 25 January The WCC was part of a global ecumenical delegation at the **7th World Social Forum**, a meeting place for civil society opposed to neo-liberalism come together to debate, think, share, propose and network. The delegation organized events focusing on: wealth, poverty and ecology; life giving agriculture; water, environment and climate change; ecological debt; and the responsibility to protect.