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FOR INFORMATION

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**AFRICA**

29-31 January

The WCC programme executive for Africa participated in a delegation to **Burundi** of the Eminent Persons Ecumenical Programme for Peace, after a recent surge in crime and violence caused the churches there to fear for the nation's stability. The delegation included representatives from the All Africa Conference of Churches and the Fellowship of Christian Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa and was headed by the former Mozambican President, Joaquim Chissano. The purpose of the visit was to "encourage Burundians to find solutions to problems...and to persist with dialogue at all levels".

30 Jan – 3 Feb

Following a wave of post electoral violence in **Kenya**, a "Living Letters" ecumenical team visit took place, sponsored by the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence project. The team met with Kenyan religious leaders of all faiths, churches, local communities, civil society organizations, government officials - including the country's vice-president Kalonzo Musyoka - and opposition leaders - including the leader and presidential candidate of the Orange Democratic Movement, Raila Odinga - to express the solidarity of churches worldwide with the Kenyan churches and to see how best the international fellowship of churches could support Kenyan churches' efforts towards peace and reconciliation.

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

8 February

Letter from the WCC general secretary to H.E. Michelle Bachelet, President of the Republic of **Chile**, expressing support for the Mapuche indigenous people in their quest for de-militarization of their territory, repeal of the anti-terrorist law and liberation of Mapuche political prisoners. He urged President Bachelet to "consider their demands... (and to) ensure an environment where they could survive as a people free from fear and harassment".

**MIDDLE EAST**

22 January

As the humanitarian crisis created by the blockade of **Gaza** by Israel grew and following a statement issued by the Heads of Church in Jerusalem, the WCC general secretary sent a letter to member churches of the WCC and ACT. The letter called on member churches to advocate with their governments and with the governments of those countries most directly involved in the Middle East for an end to the siege, an end to

the “collective punishment” and a negotiated ceasefire. It also asked for churches worldwide to show their support through humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza and messages of support to local churches in Jerusalem. The letter reiterated the WCCs stance that justice in the Middle East must be based on the international rule of law and implementation of UN Security Council resolutions pertaining to the conflict.

26 January Participants in the WCC Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel joined a countrywide Palestinian-Israeli humanitarian relief convoy in response to the Israeli government blockade of **Gaza**.

### **ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION**

28 January The WCC programme executive for poverty, wealth and ecology gave input at a preparatory meeting for the **UNCTAD XII Conference**, to be held in Accra, Ghana in April. He spoke at a hearing between civil society and the representatives of governments held in Geneva on the theme of “Strengthening UNCTAD; enhancing its development role, impact and institutional effectiveness”. He gave several reasons for why UNCTAD needed to be strengthened with overall emphasis to the point that “strengthening UNCTAD would ensure that deliberations made and strategies developed by the member states are fully implemented”.