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By-Laws of Commissions

I. By-Laws of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1961, the International Missionary Council (IMC) – which traces its history to the Edinburgh conference of 1910 – was merged with the World Council of Churches on the understanding that concerns for mission and evangelism would have a structured place at the heart of the WCC. This finds expression in the Conference and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

2. MEANINGS in these by-laws:

- 2.1 **The Conference** means the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.
- 2.2 **The Commission** means the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.
- 2.3 **The Officers** shall be the Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the Commission and the Coordinator of the Mission and Evangelism Team¹.
- 2.4 **The Staff** means the staff members of the WCC assigned to work on world mission and evangelism.

3. THE COMMISSION

3.1 Aim

In continuity with the functions formerly carried out by the International Missionary Council and articulated in the Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC, the aims of the Commission are:

- 3.1.1 To carry out the aim of the Conference: “to assist the Christian community in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, to the whole world to the end that all may believe in him and be saved” (cf 4.1).
- 3.1.2 To facilitate the common witness of the churches in each place and in all places and to help them support each other in their local, national and worldwide work of mission and evangelism.

¹ By “Mission and Evangelism team” is meant the grouping of WCC staff assigned to work on mission and evangelism within the WCC structure in force. By “coordinator of the mission and evangelism team” is meant the staff person having a leading role in or for such grouping or any other staff person designated as secretary of the CWME commission.

3.2 Specific Functions of the Commission

The specific functions of the Commission in collaboration with staff members assigned to the Mission and Evangelism team are:

- 3.2.1 To advise the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches through the Programme Committee on matters relating to mission and evangelism, including issues relating to health and healing, community and justice, and assist in the evaluation and review of programmes as appropriate.
- 3.2.2 To assist the churches and councils and other bodies in common exploration of the truth and content of the gospel in relation to culture and the manner of its public proclamation.
- 3.2.3 To promote biblical and theological studies on the nature of Christian witness, as demand arises from the life of the churches in their encounters with the contemporary world, and from the concerns of the various expressions of the ecumenical movement in mission.
- 3.2.4 To provoke the churches, mission agencies and other bodies to discern the opportunities and priorities for holistic mission, including issues relating to health and healing, community and justice, in various cultures and power structures, locally and worldwide.
- 3.2.5 To encourage common, unequivocal yet sensitive “witness in Christ’s way” so as to promote the fellowship of the church in mission.
- 3.2.6 To promote mutual dialogue on mission understanding, practice and relationships with churches as well as with other bodies not presently related to the Conference.
- 3.2.7 To communicate the ongoing concerns of mission and evangelism through publications and other instruments such as the *International Review of Mission* and the World Wide Web.
- 3.2.8 To recommend to the Central Committee the holding of and to facilitate meetings of the Conference.
- 3.2.9 To seek the enlargement, where appropriate, of the circle of formal affiliation and informal association with the Conference.
- 3.2.10 To set up *ad hoc* task groups from time to time to address specific issues related to mission and evangelism, subject to availability of funds and the approval of the Programme Committee of the Central Committee.
- 3.2.11 To raise funds for specific work arising from the Conference, subject to the approval of the Central Committee.

3.3 Structure of the Commission

- 3.3.1 The Commission shall consist of not more than thirty persons appointed by the Central Committee. The outgoing Commission on World Mission and Evangelism shall submit nominations at the appropriate time, to the Central Committee, for the Moderator and for membership of the Commission, according to the following categories:
 - a) the majority should be drawn from the member churches of the World Council of Churches;
 - b) about 25% should be chosen from those nominated by the Affiliated Bodies of the Conference;
 - c) the remaining members should be drawn from a wider constituency.
In choosing members of the Commission consideration shall be given, *inter alia*, to proven ability and commitment to reflect on mission, and to confessional, gender and regional balances consistent with WCC policies.
- 3.3.2 Members of the Commission shall be appointed after each WCC Assembly and shall hold office until the following Assembly. They shall be eligible for a further term. If a member of the Commission ceases effectively to hold office during the term of his or her appointment, a replacement will be appointed by the Central Committee to serve until the next Assembly.
- 3.3.3 The Commission shall have a Moderator elected by the Central Committee and a Vice-Moderator elected by the Commission. The Moderator normally represents the Commission and the Conference on the WCC’s Programme Committee.

- 3.3.4 The Commission shall report to the Central Committee and shall work with staff of the WCC under the direction of the General Secretary.
- 3.3.5 The Commission shall keep the member churches and the affiliated bodies of the Conference informed of its work.
- 3.3.6 The Commission may appoint a small Executive Group to act on its behalf between meetings of the Commission. Such an Executive Group would include the Officers.
- 3.3.7 The Commission shall meet normally every 18 months.

3.3.8 The staff of the Commission shall be the members of the Mission and Evangelism Team as assigned by the General Secretary. Staff shall report to the Commission but are accountable to the General Secretary on behalf of the Executive and Central Committees.

3.3.9 Finance

- a) The budget for the activities of the Commission shall be prepared and submitted to the Finance Committee as part of the unified budget of the Council.
- b) Within the overall budget and policies agreed by the Central Committee, the Commission will oversee the funding and costs of activities and projects.
- c) The Commission shall assist in developing financial resources for the work of mission and evangelism.

4. THE CONFERENCE

4.1 Aim

The aim of the Conference is to assist the Christian community in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, to the whole world to the end that all may believe in him and be saved.

4.2 Governing Principles

- 4.2.1 The main task of the Conference is to provide opportunities for churches, mission agencies, groups and national and regional councils concerned with Christian mission to meet together for reflection and consultation leading to common witness.
- 4.2.2 The Conference shall normally meet once between Assemblies. This Conference Meeting shall be convened by the Commission with the approval of the Central Committee. The Moderator and vice-Moderator of this Conference Meeting shall be the Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the Commission together with the Coordinator of the Mission and Evangelism Team.
- 4.2.3 The results of the Conference Meeting shall be communicated to the constituency of the Conference by the Commission and shall also be reported to the Assembly and the Central Committee through the Commission.
- 4.2.4 Administrative and executive responsibilities of the Conference shall be carried out by the Commission and staff.

4.3 Membership of the Conference

- 4.3.1 Subject to the approval of the Central Committee the Commission shall determine the size, membership and programme of the World Conference, with due attention to regional, confessional, gender and age diversity within the overall norms set by the WCC. Due care will be taken to provide for substantial representation of WCC member churches and CWME Affiliated Bodies from names submitted by these member churches and bodies, along with a number of other persons involved at the frontiers of Christian mission.
- 4.3.2 The Commission shall take care to maintain an ongoing communication with member churches and members of the Conference following the Conference Meeting itself, in order that this body of people may assist in following-up decisions made by the Conference Meeting and may serve as interpreters of developments related to Conference follow-up.
- 4.3.3 Members of the Conference shall seek to promote in their councils and churches the aims and findings of the Conference Meeting and the work of the Mission and Evangelism Team. Members of the Conference shall draw to the attention of the Commission matters with which they feel it should be concerned. They shall seek to promote support, including financial support, for the work of the Mission and Evangelism Team.
- 4.3.4 Consultants and observers may be invited to meetings of the Conference. They shall have the right to speak, but not to vote.

4.3.5 *Quorum of the Conference*

One third of the members of the Conference shall constitute a quorum at any given session, provided that

- a) among them there are members of the Conference from each continent, and
- b) among the members present at least one third of the Affiliated Bodies are represented.

4.4 **Affiliation and Consultative Relations**

4.4.1 National councils or regional conferences which accept the aim of the Conference may become affiliated to the Conference. All Councils affiliated to the CWME under the previous Constitution shall be regarded as affiliated to the Conference under these by-laws, unless they notify to the contrary.

4.4.2 Churches in countries where there is no affiliated national council may apply for affiliation to the Conference.

4.4.3 A group of churches organized for joint action for mission in a country where there is an affiliated national council or such an international or intercontinental group of churches may also apply for affiliation.

4.4.4 Other churches which are not members of the WCC and other mission bodies may apply for affiliation to the Conference, provided they accept the aim of the Conference.

4.4.5 Applications for affiliation shall be considered by the Commission. The Commission shall consider whether applicants show commitment to do mission in common and in dialogue. If the application is supported by a two-thirds majority of the Commission present and voting, this action shall be communicated to the affiliated members of the Conference and, unless objection is received from more than one third of them within six months, the applicant shall be declared affiliated. There shall be consultation with the member churches of the WCC in the area concerned, except in the case of councils or organisations already in association with the WCC.

4.4.6 National and regional Christian councils and churches and other groupings, may – while not desiring affiliation – request a consultative relation with the Conference. In such cases, those requesting such a consultative relationship must accept the aims of the Conference. Action on such requests shall be taken by the Commission. Councils and other groupings in consultative relation may send consultants to meetings of the Conference, who shall be entitled to speak but not vote.

5. **AMENDMENTS**

5.1 The Central Committee may make amendments on the recommendation of, or in consultation with, the Commission.

5.2 Amendments may be proposed by the Conference, the Affiliated Bodies of the Conference or the Commission.

5.3 Notice of any proposed amendment must be sent to the Affiliated Bodies of the Conference not less than six months prior to its consideration by the Commission.

5.4 The Commission may recommend a proposed amendment to the Central Committee unless one-third of the Affiliated Bodies of the Conference have indicated in writing prior to the Commission meeting that they oppose the amendment.

Version as adopted at the 1999 session of the WCC Central Committee and as amended following the CWME commission and Executive Group meetings in 2007.

II. By-Laws of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs: An Explanatory Note

- A. Wherever there is a variance between the existing CCIA by-laws and the Central Committee resolution from the 30 August – 6 September 2006 meeting (see below), the Central Committee resolution will take precedence. This specifically, therefore, will also apply to the number of members of the Commission and the expanded and integrated mandate to encompass the work of the former consultative bodies.

WCC Central Committee, 30 August – 6 September 2006, Geneva, Switzerland Document No. GEN/NOM 02, Integration of Consultative Bodies

3. Integrated re-organization of consultative bodies

1) In relation to the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA)

The nominations committee affirms, together with the programme committee, the rationale of bringing four advisory groups into one under the name of CCIA. In the spirit of full representation and expertise, the nominations committee sees a need for reviewing the number of members of the CCIA. In relation to that, the possibility of forming smaller time-limited ad hoc working groups was raised. The central committee agrees to:

- i) combine the four consultative bodies – the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), the Commission of the Churches on Diaconia and Development (CCDD), the Commission of the Churches on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (CJPC) and the Reference Group on Inter-religious Relations and Dialogue (IRRD) – to strengthen interactive, integrated and coherent witness; the advisory work would build on the strengths of each of these commissions;*
- ii) increase the number of members of the commission to 38 in order to accommodate concerns brought by the four areas of work combined and to ensure fuller representation and expertise;*
- iii) mandate the newly appointed commission under the name and title of “Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA)” to revise and/or amend its by-laws in light of the proposals made by the outgoing commissions and the programmes that it will accompany, and give consideration to a name that best reflects the work with which it is charged,, and present them to the next meeting of the central committee. “*

B. In addition:

It is understood that in light of the above:

- i. Taking into account the increased size of the Commission, Article 6.2 of the CCIA by-laws will require that any thirteen (13) members of the Commission or the General Secretary of the Council may request a meeting of the Commission to be convened.
- ii. Article 6.3 of the CCIA by-laws will permit substitution of members at meetings without the right to participate in the decision making process.
- iii. CCIA by-laws Article 8.2 (c) permits the Moderator of CCIA, in consultation with the Director of CCIA, to authorize a member of the Commission to act in the name of the Commission.

III. By-Laws of the Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation

1. Purpose

The Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation (the Commission) is advisory to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches through the Programme Committee.

2. Aims and Functions

2.1 Education and Ecumenical Formation represents a significant historical strand of the ecumenical movement. It remains at the heart of the concerns of churches, congregations, councils, ecumenical organizations, movements and individuals and enables them to participate in the ecumenical vocation and imperative. Through education, people and churches learn to be and to act.

2.2 The Commission shall, therefore, in collaboration with churches and networks:

2.2.1 foster the understanding and practice of ecumenical learning;

2.2.2 support the churches' educational ministry within the Christian community and the world, including that of equipping people in the practice of personal discipleship and mission, developing lay leadership, the theological education of all in the local congregation and promoting human resource development;

2.2.3 through its projects promote ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation;

2.2.4 educate and form ecumenical leaders, both clergy and lay, for service in parishes, classrooms and ecumenical centres around the world through the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey;

2.2.5 create activities to help families, congregations and church related institutions to be inclusive learning communities;

2.2.6 reflect on and respond to emerging educational needs and developments.

2.3 The Commission shall monitor and support the work of staff associated with the Ecumenical Formation programme.

2.4 Within the framework of the policies set by the Central Committee and with the approval of the Central Committee and its Programme Committee, the Commission shall help initiate and carry out appropriate activities for the furtherance of these aims.

3. Membership, Officers and Staff of the Commission

3.1 The Commission shall be composed of no more than 30 members appointed by the Central Committee. They shall be appointed after each Assembly and shall hold office until the following Assembly.

3.2 The Officers of the Commission shall be the Moderator, who shall be elected by Central Committee, a Vice-Moderator who shall be elected by the Commission and, ex-officio, the Director of the Programme on Education and Ecumenical Formation.

3.3 As well as being broadly representative of the membership of the Council in respect of region, culture and confession, members should be appointed for their relevant experience and knowledge of education and ecumenical formation. At least 10 members should be representative of networks associated with education and ecumenical formation, specifically

including ecumenical theological education and OIKOSNET (the world network of laity centres) or any successor bodies.

- 3.4 The Roman Catholic Church, and any other body determined by the Commission, shall be invited to send consultants to the meetings of the Commission. Such consultants shall be entitled to full participation in the work of the Commission except that they shall not be entitled to participate in decision-making as defined in the Rules of the World Council of Churches.
- 3.5 The Commission shall normally meet every 18 months.
- 3.6 The staff of the Commission shall be the members of the Programme on Education and Ecumenical Formation as assigned by the General Secretary. Staff shall report to the Commission but are accountable to the General Secretary on behalf of the Executive and Central Committees.

4. Working Groups

The Commission shall appoint an Executive of six people – three officers plus three commissioners – to meet as and when required, such meetings to take place in Geneva with advisers/partners present as required by the agenda. The Executive shall deal only with matters which cannot be left until the full Commission meeting and circulate a report to the whole Commission.

5. Finance

- 5.1 The budget for the activities of the Commission and its Executive shall be included in the programme as part of the unified budget of the Council.
- 5.2 Within the overall budget and policies agreed by the Central Committee, the Commission will support the staff in developing and monitoring the funding and costs of activities and projects.
- 5.3 The Commission shall assist in developing financial resources for the work of education and ecumenical formation.

6. Meetings

- 6.1 The time and location of the meeting shall be determined by the Officers and shall normally be set not less than twelve months before the meeting.
- 6.2 If a member gives sufficient notice of being unable to attend a meeting of the Commission, the Officers may invite a substitute who shall have the right to speak..
- 6.3 If a member of the Executive gives sufficient notice of being unable to attend a meeting, the Officers may invite another commissioner as a substitute.
- 6.4 Persons having special competence on major matters under discussion may be invited by the Officers to attend a meeting of the Commission in the role of consultant or adviser, having the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making as defined in the Rules of the World Council of Churches.
- 6.5 The quorum for a meeting of the Commission shall be 50% plus one members of the Commission

7. Amendments to the By-Laws

These by-laws may be amended by the Central Committee in consultation with or on the recommendation of the Commission.

IV. By-Laws of the Echos - Commission on Youth in the Ecumenical Movement

1. Introduction
2. Meanings
3. Name and Organization
4. Aims
5. Functions of the Commission
6. Membership and Structure of the Commission
7. Amendments to the By-Laws

1. Introduction

The World Council of Churches 9th Assembly “endorsed promoting ecumenical leadership development of youth in the life of the WCC, including the full participation of youth in all programmes of the WCC. Their voices, concerns and presence must be brought more directly into the decision-making and leadership of the work and governance of the Council” (c.f. Programme Guidelines Committee par. 15).

As a result, the WCC 9th Assembly “directed the WCC Central Committee to create a representative body of young adults who would coordinate the various roles of young adults connected to the WCC and facilitate communication between them. Such a body would create space for a meaningful participation of young adults in the life and decision making of the WCC, and would be able to hold the WCC accountable to its goals regarding young adults” (c.f. Policy Reference Committee par.14).

After the Assembly, the WCC Executive Committee followed the process in the spirit of the Assembly and “approved the organization of an interim “youth body” to meet just before the next Executive Committee gathering in August 2006 so as to prepare a proposal for a permanent body for action and adoption at the Central Committee” (c.f. Executive Committee Minutes May 2006 7.4.1.3. p. 65). The “interim youth body” met in August 2006 and brought to the Central Committee a more detailed and concrete proposal based on the input from youth at the 9th Assembly and their own experiences and advice as ecumenical youth leaders. After the Central Committee meeting in 2006, the Executive Committee was directed to approve the appointment of 25 youth according to the guidelines of the “interim youth body”. The “youth body” met for the first time in May 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland and identified its main aims and a new name in keeping with the spirit from the WCC 9th Assembly.

2. Meanings in these by-laws:

- 2.1 **Echos**, means Echos Commission on Youth in the Ecumenical Movement
- 2.2 **The Steering Group** shall be the Moderator, Vice-Moderator and coordinators of working groups, and the programme executive for youth in the WCC.
- 2.3 **The Staff** means the staff of the WCC assigned to work with youth/young adults.

3. Name and Organization

- 3.1 The Commission shall be called Echos Commission on Youth in the Ecumenical Movement.
- 3.2 The Commission shall be appointed by the Central Committee and shall hold office until the next Assembly.
- 3.3 The Commission is a consultative body of the World Council of Churches responsible to the Central Committee through its Policy Reference Committee and Programme Guidelines Committee and shall work with staff of the WCC under the direction of the General Secretary.

4. Aims

- 4.1 To ensure the sustainable and active involvement of young adults in all levels of the WCC by developing their leadership skills and advocating for broader participation of young adults in the WCC.
- 4.2 To model and encourage intergenerational partnership and dialogue.

4.3 To broaden and strengthen the ecumenical movement through networking with young adults from local, regional and global ecumenical organizations—inside and outside the WCC constituency—and facilitating spaces for exchange.

5. Functions of the Commission

5.1 Consultation and mutual accountability within the WCC

- a) To support the young people serving in various roles within the WCC by facilitating communication and coordination between them (c.f. Policy Reference Committee report, p.14, Porto Alegre, 2006).
- b) To be a forum for collecting and articulating the issues and concerns of young people using an interactive and collaborative approach within the WCC.
- c) To advocate for and facilitate the ongoing and increased active involvement of young adults in the WCC especially by collaborating with the WCC decision-making bodies.

5.2 Networking with the wider ecumenical movement

- a) To broaden and strengthen the partnerships between young adults active in churches and local, regional and global ecumenical organizations.
- b) To facilitate spaces for exchange among active young adults coming from various churches and ecumenical youth organizations and together take initiatives which will serve young adults and the ecumenical movement.

5.3 Strengthening ecumenical formation and leadership

- a) To encourage youth ecumenical formation at local, regional and global levels.
- b) To enhance and promote the leadership development of young people for the ongoing work of the WCC and the sustainability of the broader ecumenical movement.
- c) To encourage the creation of resources for young ecumenical leaders who are engaged in the WCC and in the wider ecumenical movement.

6. Membership and Structure of the Commission

6.1 The Nominations Committee of the Central Committee will nominate the members of the Commission. The members of the Commission shall be appointed after each WCC Assembly and their term shall last until the next assembly. The term of the Commissioners will end if the Commissioner does not represent his/her constituency anymore. The Commission will consist of twenty-five (25) young people (18-30 years old) with the following composition:

- a) Six (6) young Central Committee members shall be invited to serve. At least four (4) of these will be expected to serve. One to two among these four shall be from the Executive Committee.
- b) The members of the Commission will consist of one (1) young person from each of the following WCC consultative bodies: Faith and Order Plenary or Standing Commission, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation, Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, and Joint Consultative Group between the Pentecostal Churches and the WCC.
- c) Members should include at least one (1) young person from Catholic youth and student's network and one (1) young person from a church in the Pentecostal tradition.
- d) In order to expand ecumenical cooperation, the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), YMCA and YWCA (Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations), SYNDESMOS World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth and any other important ecumenical youth partners and successor bodies (i.e. Regional Ecumenical bodies) are also invited to nominate youth to Echos (this could include one individual from a non-member church). Two to four of these youth nominated will be part of the Commission.
- e) The remaining members of the Commission will come from WCC member churches. At least one member from WCC will be invited from the Ecumenical Disabilities Advocacy Network and at least one indigenous youth.
- f) As well as being broadly representative of the membership of the Council in respect of region, culture, gender and confession, members should be appointed for their relevant experience and

knowledge of ecumenism and their active involvement with youth networks in the church and ecumenical movement.

g) In the selection process the aim is also to involve as many Commissioners who will be under the age of thirty by the end of the term in order to maintain a balance of age in the Commission.

6.2 The Commission shall have a Moderator elected by the Central Committee. A Vice-Moderator shall be from among the Central Committee members. An invitation to be Vice-Moderator will be given to Executive Committee members. If all Executive Committee members decline, an invitation will be given to Central Committee members.

6.3 The staff of the Commission shall be those working with the project on youth and young adults as assigned by the General Secretary. Staff shall report to the Commission but are accountable to the General Secretary on behalf of the Executive and Central Committees.

6.4 Members who are not able to actively fulfill their tasks will be approached by the Steering Group and staff to discern whether they will continue to serve their term or not. If a member of the Commission formally ceases to serve his or her appointment, a replacement will be appointed by the Central Committee to serve until the next Assembly. Replacements will keep as best as possible, a balance in terms of region, church confession and gender.

6.5 The tasks of the Commissioner shall be to:

- a) Attend the meetings of the Commission and to participate in its work.
- b) Correspond with the Steering Group and working groups, drawing their attention to matters concerning the aims of the Commission, and to advise them in pursuit of such matters.
- c) Keep the churches and affiliated bodies of the WCC informed of its work.
- d) Promote the participation and leadership of youth in the churches and the ecumenical movement.
- e) Fulfill the expectations specified in the supporting document, called *Guidelines for Echos members*.

6.6 Meetings of the Commission

- a) The Quorum of the Commission shall be 50% plus one of the members of the Commission.
- b) The Commission shall meet at least four times between assemblies at a place and time determined by the staff in coordination with the Steering Group.
- c) In the case of members who give sufficient notice that are unable to attend a meeting of the Commission, the Steering Group and staff may invite a substitute in consultation with the Commissioner who will be absent. The substitute shall have the right to speak.

6.7 Working Groups

The Commission may establish working groups to consider aspects of the work of the Commission. Such working groups shall be given a defined mandate and report to the Commission. The working groups will be facilitated by coordinators who are appointed by the Commission.

6.8 Finance

- a) The budget for the activities of the Commission shall be prepared in consultation with the Steering Group and submitted to the Finance Committee as part of the unified budget of the Council.
- b) The Commission will receive reports on the budget and funding of the work of the WCC. The Commission will provide oversight of the WCC planning and policy especially regarding the funding of programmatic activities and projects related to the Commission's mandate.
- c) The Commission should work through appropriate channels to develop additional financial resources available for the work of youth & young adults.

7. Amendments to the By-Laws

- a) These by-laws may be amended by the Central Committee on the recommendation of, or in consultation with the Commission.
- b) Three months' notice shall be given to members of the Commission in respect of any proposal to consider an amendment to the by-laws at a meeting of the Commission.