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TO PROGRAMME COMMITTEE FOR ACTION
TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR INFORMATION

**Report on the WCC Mid-Term Programme Evaluation
for the Period 2006 - 2008**

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1. Background

The WCC executive committee at its meeting in February 2007 approved a process of evaluation that would take place at three moments before the 10th WCC assembly in 2013. These would be:

- a) an internal evaluation in November of each year;
- b) in 2009 – an external mid-term evaluation between two assemblies, which would involve external experts, members of the central committee, funding partners and churches, and this report would go to the central committee in August 2009;
- c) in 2012 – a comprehensive pre-assembly external evaluation that would deliver a report to the central committee in August 2012 in preparation for the 10th assembly.

1.2. The purpose of the mid-term evaluation 2009

The purpose of the evaluation is to appraise, assess impacts and relevance, and reflect on the work done in order to draw learnings for the next phase of the work. All evaluations cover the contents of programmes as well as management issues, with a particular effort to keep a good balance between both. Evaluation takes into consideration indicators (as described in the programme plans); programme committee evaluation criteria as described by the central committee in September 2006 (Doc. No. GEN/PRO 02 §70); feedback from staff and the WCC constituency.

The evaluation team recognized that the mid-term evaluation of the WCC programmes post-Porto Alegre takes place at a critical time characterized by the current global economic crisis. This has pushed our planet into a crisis of life itself in which millions of people are afflicted by global economic injustice with its resultant poverty; ecological crisis and exclusion of the majority from abundant life. This crisis is not only physical, it is spiritual. It is a crisis of hope itself. The WCC through its programmes, projects and activities is therefore challenged at a time such as this to demonstrate its capacity for prophetic and pioneering work in building sustainable communities. It is in this contextual framework that this evaluation takes place.

The evaluation team took its task seriously; taking as a starting point the reading of background documentation provided by the planning and integration (P&I) staff team; understanding and clarifying the process and criteria adopted by the central committee in September 2006; and the framework for evaluation as articulated by the WCC executive committee at its meeting in February 2007. It began its task by listening to the context in the WCC through conversations with the staff leadership. It was recognized from the beginning that this is a mid-term evaluation taking place within a short timeframe of two years which included several processes of planning and implementation of the post-Porto Alegre programme recommendations. By necessity, this would be a “lighter” mid-term evaluation; but the planned pre-assembly external evaluation (2012) will be more detailed and comprehensive.

1.3. The scope of the evaluation and methodology

The evaluation team discerned the scope of the mid-term evaluation in this way:

- to determine to what extent programmes, projects and activities implemented during the period under evaluation (2006-2008) met the overall programme goals set out in the post Porto Alegre period.
- to assess whether these programmes have contributed to the role and purpose of the WCC.
- to assess the impact of this work on the churches, regional networks and partners.
- to review the effectiveness of the planning monitoring and evaluation process in enabling clear, and well functioning planning, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- to assess the extent to which the consensus spirit is reflected in all the work of the WCC.
- to assess to what extent principles of inclusion – especially of youth – are respected and adhered to.

The **methodology** for this evaluation included three face to face meetings in Geneva between February and July 2009, and email communication in-between these meetings. The data was gathered through

meetings with staff leadership and some programme executive staff; questionnaires to the WCC constituency [Appendix 3]; telephone interviews with focus groups and networks which closely cooperate with the WCC; and meeting with the WCC programme committee core group. The evaluation team took time to read all the relevant materials provided to them beginning with the pre-Porto Alegre assembly evaluation, the programme guidelines committee (PGC) report of the assembly, reports of programmes and commissions and central committee programme reports, especially of the central committee 2006. From the documents it received, it was able to determine the methodology in order to follow to assess the impact of this complex organization. The data gathered was then analysed for major trends.

The evaluation team provided forward looking recommendations for further work in the next phase of programme implementation.

2. The present programme structure and its origins

The 9th assembly in Porto Alegre had reaffirmed article III of the WCC constitution as the basis for its work. Article III affirms the commitment of the WCC to promote the prayerful search for forgiveness, the development of deeper relationships through theological dialogue and the sharing of human, spiritual, and material resources; to facilitate common witness, express commitment to diakonia in serving human need; to nurture the growth of ecumenical consciousness; to assist each other in relationships to and with people of other faiths; to foster renewal and growth through unity, worship, mission and service.¹

The WCC was also challenged to re-interpret and sharpen its role and place in the ecumenical movement in the 21st century while keeping unity, spirituality and mission as its major priorities. Ecumenical formation, global justice and diakonia as well as prophetic witness in the world in dialogue and cooperation with people of other faiths were all described in the PGC report.

The call was for an integrated and interactive programme structure which would be grounded in theological reflection led to the decision to have six programmes – each having an identity and projects of its own while seeing itself as one segment of a WCC programme.

The central committee in September 2006 approved the following programmes as the structure for the next period:

- P1 WCC and the ecumenical movement in the 21st century
- P2 Unity, mission, evangelism and spirituality
- P3 Public witness: Addressing power, affirming peace
- P4 Justice diakonia and responsibility for creation
- P5 Education and ecumenical formation
- P6 Inter-religious dialogue and cooperation
- C1 Communication as an integrated element in all programmes, carried out interactively with key constituencies and towards building a public profile for the WCC.

In order to ensure that these programmes respond to the vision and mission of the WCC, eight major achievements were articulated, under three main themes of living out Christian unity more fully; being neighbours to all; and taking greater care of creation.²

The evaluation team worked from a broad framework of understanding of the focussed work within the programmes; the articulated eight major achievements; methodology or ways of working as articulated in the understanding of functions of the WCC; and the role of communication, and planning and integration.

¹ Vision and Purpose of the Work of the WCC, April 2009 pg 6

² For details of 8 major achievements, see Vision and Purpose of the Work of the WCC, April 2009 pg 9

The seven basic principles set by the Porto Alegre assembly to guide the programme priorities of the WCC were applied as a lens in assessing the impact of the WCC at this mid-term of implementation.

3. Organizational structure for the work of the WCC

The 9th assembly of the WCC instructed the general secretary of the WCC “in consultation with the central committee, to implement clear and consistent changes to the working style, organizational structure and staffing of the WCC necessary to meet the current and future challenges of the ecumenical movement” [cf. Report of the policy reference committee, para.12]. This work has been carried out and is evident in the new staffing model and ways of working currently underway. The intended goal of the new model is to improve the quality and impact of the work undertaken by the WCC as a fellowship of its member churches around the world; and to promote integration and interaction, flexibility and responsiveness, as well as a cooperative style of work and partnership with others in the ecumenical movement.³

The evaluation team was made aware that a separate process to review management and governance roles in the WCC was underway. While welcoming this process as needing to be separate from the mid-term programme evaluation, the evaluation team signalled, in its first interim report to the programme committee core group meeting held on 16 May 2009, that impacts of internal mechanisms and processes of decision-making by management and governance have implications for programme planning and implementation.

The evaluation team considers that the programme work of the WCC requires efficient and transparent systems of budgeting, financial accountability and management systems as well as staffing policies and decision-making processes and therefore stresses that the work of the working group on governance, accountability and staffing policies needs to be informed by the mid-term programme evaluation report and that critical and analytical links be made in order to enrich the findings and learnings from these two processes (see the detailed recommendations 8.2.A and 8.2.B).

4. Meeting with the core group of the programme committee

The second meeting of the evaluation team took place on 11-12 May 2009, at the same time as that of the core group of the programme committee of the central committee. An interim report of the issues emerging in the evaluation was presented to the core group for feedback. Two issues were discussed: the very limited response to the questionnaire, especially from the members of the central committee; and some of the learnings emerging regarding the impact of the WCC’s work on the constituency. Suggestions from the core group included the following:

- That the evaluation report should include recommendations on strategic ways to move forward on the seven principles of the programme guidelines committee of the Porto Alegre assembly;
- Is the question of relevance of programmes the right question to ask? How does the WCC address the relevance of programmes in such a diverse constituency? A question posed was whether relevance at all levels at all times should be criteria for WCC programmes?
- Who is the primary ‘target’ of WCC programmes? The addressees of programmes have to be clear;
- “Friends of WCC” (trying to be set up by the fundraising advisory group) who signalled interest for fundraising should be included in the evaluation process.

5. Listening to the staff leadership and programme executive staff

Quote: “Seeds have been planted, we are yet to see the harvest, may be in 2009, or 2010 we may see some harvest.”

³ Organizational Structure of the work of the WCC, Doc. No Gen 4, 2006

Working in teams of two, the evaluation team met with the programme directors and the director of communication, as well as some programme executive staff. This formed the focus of information gathering of the first evaluation team's meeting in February 2009. It was critical to listen to staff with regard to their assessment of what was working well, and what were the challenges needing to be addressed. They provided for the evaluation team a contextual understanding of institutional challenges, such as how long it takes for structural changes to take root.

The evaluation team focused its questions and listening on the relevance and significance of programmes; significant outcomes and their impacts; signs of building and nurturing integration among programme areas; effectiveness of planning, monitoring and evaluation; and linkages between human and financial capacities for effective programme implementation. This initial listening provided content for further analysis and tentative areas that informed the clusters of learnings in this mid-term evaluation.

6. Affirmations and challenges

6.1 To a large extent, the WCC is more focused and clearer on its roles and goals. The key elements are in the convening role of the wider ecumenical space; the clarifying role within the different ecumenical processes, such as the role the WCC had in the establishment of ACT Alliance; the interpreting role of global impacts of systemic nature and in seeking global responses; prophetic and pioneering role; maintaining the coherence of the ecumenical movement; representational role of diverse voices from around the world; etc.

6.2. Methodology of working in new ways and in new structures are in place and are becoming visible and focused within programme areas. While this approach may minimize isolation and working in silos and contribute to programme integration; the impacts on staff time and work-load are yet to be assessed. For example, the attempt to ensure staff inter-programme collaboration by working in interactive staff teams across programme areas has had mixed results and needs further work and discussion with regard to effectiveness and efficiency.

6.3. There are growing challenges to doing less. Some of these challenges are emergent work arising out of crisis moments around the world; diverse expectations from constituencies on what the staff should be working on; ongoing work from previous mandates which have not necessarily ended among the constituencies; priority work at any given time to which all are required to contribute e.g. The Decade to Overcome Violence. [See recommendation of the evaluation team 8.2.A]

6.4 Commitment to collaboration with sister organizations and specialized ministries does exist and is critical to the effectiveness of the WCC's work. This collaboration does not come easily due to the different rhythms, perspectives, constituencies and timelines for programmes and projects in those organizations.

6.5 Planning monitoring evaluation and reporting processes have been more helpful than unhelpful. What has been helpful includes planning and documentation, annual internal evaluations, and regular updates on financial implications. What has been unhelpful is the "one size fits all" approach, timeliness of evaluations so results are integrated in future planning of projects, and what seems to be a recycling of information. [Appendix 1 for further reflection on PMER]

6.6 Communication is key to enabling WCC constituencies become engaged with the work of the WCC, and in making visible the role of the WCC in the life of the membership. A communications culture needs to be internalized by all programmes.

7. Gleanings from diverse constituencies

7.1. The questionnaire prepared by the evaluation team focussed on an attempt to understand to what extent the WCC programmes have strengthened relationships between and among churches and ecumenical networks and its partners; brought greater coherence to the ecumenical movement by clarifying complementary roles; empowered the churches in their actions for justice and peace in the world. Respondents were also asked to comment on the implementation of the consensus model of decision-making and the consensus spirit in ecumenical discussions as well as the WCC's success rate in ensuring full inclusivity of gender, age, region, families of churches, etc. in its work.

Close to six hundred questionnaires were sent to member churches, ecumenical networks and specialized ministries. A scale of rating was used as well as provision for additional comments. Seventy two responses were received back of which forty six were from member churches of the WCC, five from national councils of churches, two regional ecumenical organizations, and nine from specialized ministries. An analysis of the respondents – representatives of churches, ecumenical organizations, specialized ministries, representatives of networks – was done.

7.2. Some major threads from the questionnaires

The evaluation team recognizes the complexity of the organization and the diversity it represents and the difficulty therefore in assessing impact. And therefore, in assessing the strengths and challenges of the responses, the evaluation team chose to share the main threads of the issues commonly named in response to each area of questions.

7.2.1. Relevance of WCC programmes

7.2.1.[a] There is a very strong thread from respondents affirming that the WCC programmes in general provide a global framework to their local realities and struggles. Therefore some would call on the WCC to play a more proactive role in challenging member churches to place their internal agenda in the context of the global movement. Many respondents affirm those programmes where the WCC has created a common platform for their participation – among the many examples given, was the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum, the work on climate change, the decade to overcome violence, inter-religious dialogue, work on poverty wealth and ecology, etc.

7.2.1.[b] Rating of relevance of particular programmes was as varied as the respondents' experience of that particular programme or projects. There is a gap between those who affirm the programmes dealing with theology, unity and spirituality and those affirming programmes which focus on advocacy and justice issues. For some, there is a perception that theology is the realm of Faith and Order only; where as theological reflection must be an integral part of all programmes and projects.

7.2.1.[c] Ratings of relevance of particular programmes and projects was also varied between those who are directly touched or experiencing or have need for WCC's enabling role; and those who are helped by the same programmes and projects in framing a global response to these issues. A common thread is that all the programmes are relevant to some part of the constituency. Some would say that all the programmes of the WCC are important but some do not touch their lives immediately, though they are relevant to others. To some regions the WCC's role in these fields is crucial for their own engagement in the ecumenical movement locally and globally. Similarly the concerns of Faith and Order, justice, diakonia and advocacy, find greater support in some regions than in others as do the programmes with youth and women, DOV, and inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. The evaluations therefore indicate relative and not absolute value to any programme.

Quote: "The WCC's focus on the Middle East has helped us in working for peace in this region, inter-religious coexistence, human rights, etc."

Quote: "Although the WCC has clearly committed itself to the ecumenical goal of full visible unity and has contributed significantly to it over the decades, we believe few churches look at the WCC as a strong mover toward that goal today."

Quote: "The WCC has the capacity to be a leader to galvanize momentum. Also, since actions speak louder than words, if we can learn to model a new way of living in Earth Community, others will too. We need closer communication, cooperation and solidarity."

Quote: "WCC is an agent of transformation. Programmes launched according to each one's own context are a way to rescue people who are excluded and empower them for life."

Quote: "Clearly defined programmes with clear aims and objectives, and an operational model that seeks to facilitate and coordinate ecumenical work is most relevant work for WCC."

7.2.2 Communication with the WCC constituency

7.2.2 [a] A common thread emerging in the response to this question is that the programmes of the WCC have an impact only when the WCC makes a special effort to contact the churches; working with the local constituency in communication; and in making visible the work of the WCC. A call for more collaboration, participation, common planning and implementation between the churches and the WCC is key to making this way of working possible.

7.2.2 [b] Another common thread was that those who indicated little or no contact with the WCC on any programmatic level experienced lesser impact due to the lack of communication.

Quotes:

"We do not see any products that impact our church in our context."

"The only people who hear from the WCC are those participating in the central committee."

"Communication via internet has limited access in my church."

"The use of English as the only language in communicating programmes limits the participation by those for whom English is not their working language."

7.2.2.[c] Sometimes WCC programmes are not communicated strongly and clearly enough to enable diverse constituencies to connect to them. Many say that they do not receive detailed information and clear guidelines on specific topics they are being requested to engage in.

7.2.2.[d] Visits to member churches by the general secretary and other programmes were highlighted by those who have been visited as a great source of solidarity and accompaniment, effective in making contact with the wider community, and enabling ecumenical actions at the local level.

7.2.2.[e] The WCC could be more pro-active and timely in communicating with its constituencies.

Quote: "In many instances, last minute communication does not allow much time for preparation and quality of engagement."

7.2.3. Inclusiveness

7.2.3 [a] A common thread from respondents is that the WCC makes a concerted effort at being inclusive and this is appreciated and affirmed on the whole. Caution was expressed that this should not be at the expense of qualitative participation and exclusion of other skills. Attention should be paid to capacity building for participation.

7.2.3[b] There are indications that there is still a dominance of clergy and hierarchy of the church who gain access and voice in the WCC decision-making processes and in programmatic work. Care should be taken to ensure that all new and those “unknown” in ecumenical circles are discovered and included in the work of the WCC. There is a perception of the existence of a “club mentality” in that the same people are called or involved all the time in the representation of their church, networks or categories.

Quote: “Since Porto Alegre, inclusive participation has remained a challenge but there has been much improvement. Other and new manifestations of exclusion (e.g. racism) have been less addressed in a coherent and systematic manner.”

7.2.4. Consensus model of decision-making

7.2.4.[a] With regard to the consensus model of decision-making a common thread was that it is still new in its implementation, and only those in the governance bodies were aware of it to provide comment. However, those respondents who have experienced it as used in the WCC processes evaluated the implementation of this method positively; that it provides a larger number of participants in the governing bodies a sense of responsibility; and that it invites people to listen to each other more carefully, thus improving the quality of interaction and a deepening of ecumenical relationships within the WCC. Some would say it is more a “spiritual” than a “political” method of engagement. It could become a model for decision-making in churches and other ecumenical settings.

7.2.4.[b] Threads of cautionary comments on the consensus model of decision-making pointed to the risk that the WCC might lose its prophetic voice; that it could “take the steam out” of the power of statements of the WCC. It could lead to internal paralysis and manipulation by those with power and privilege. Power embedded in cultural ways of doing things; knowledge; language; and access to information.

7.2.4.[c] There is a call for the identification of “differentiated consensus” over and above “cheap consensus.” The need for continuous training of moderators and improving the use of the method has been underlined. The cards have not yet been used to their full potential.

8. Assessing impacts of WCC programmes through the lens of seven basic principles and recommendations

The evaluation team worked from a broad framework of understanding of the focussed work within the programmes; the articulated eight major achievements; methodology or ways of working as articulated in the understanding of functions of the WCC; and the role of communication, and planning and integration.

While it was important for the evaluation team to assess, through the questionnaire and telephone interviews, whether the programmes as they exist are having the desired impact on the life of the churches – it recognized that the present structure was in itself too unwieldy making it difficult for the staff and the governing bodies to prioritize and to “do less and do it better” as the assembly had called for.

It also has become difficult for the WCC to give greater weight to what some have identified as the WCC’s core responsibilities as the demands of the constituency embrace a wide range of concerns. The challenge to the evaluation team was to also monitor whether the integrated and interactive working style in the WCC programme structure, as called for by the assembly, had been successfully implemented to enable the programme work at hand.

The Seven Basic Principles set to guide the programme priorities of the WCC by the assembly, were applied as a lens in assessing the impact of the WCC at this mid-term of implementation and in providing forward looking recommendations.

8.1 To keep its focus upon what the WCC uniquely might do as a global fellowship of churches in providing leadership to the whole of the ecumenical movement

Since Porto Alegre, the process of sharpening the role of the WCC in the midst of a multiplicity of ecumenical organizations has preoccupied the staff and governing bodies of the WCC. Clarity is emerging on the convening role of the WCC within the wider ecumenical movement, e.g. the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum. Another example cited is the WCC Round Table, as a space where partners of the WCC explore ways of working together and resourcing the work of the WCC. Additionally, the WCC is recognizing its prophetic and pioneering role. It has committed itself to maintaining the coherence of the ecumenical movement and of clarifying its role within the ecumenical movement.

However, on reviewing the plans of the WCC and listening to respondents, the challenge remains on how the WCC interprets this changing role into relevant programmes and methodologies.

Therefore the evaluation team **recommends:**

8.1.A. That this process of understanding what the role of the WCC is, and its way of working, be a continuing priority for the central committee and staff.

8.2 To do less, to do it well, in an integrated, collaborative and interactive approach

The methodology of working with an integrated approach is becoming visible and focused within the programmatic areas, e.g. common work on ecclesiology, mission and unity. There is growing intentionality by the commissions to come together and deliberate on a common agenda. There are also new ways of working and new structures in place – such as the finance committee instituting a common budget with full transparency of direct programme, staff and infrastructure costs which works closely with the one programme committee with overview for vision and purpose of all the WCC programmes.

In order to strengthen these efforts (aware that similar recommendations have already been made the programme committee and the working group on governance) the evaluation team **recommends:**

8.2. A. That there be greater clarity of roles among the different layers of decision-making and their links to staff leadership in the priority setting of programmes.

8.2. B. That roles and functions of commissions, advisory groups and reference groups be reviewed so as to ensure greater integration and collaboration.

8.3 To lift up its central task of the churches calling one another to visible unity

The evaluation team heard through the responses to the questionnaire that the search for visible unity among the churches is not only a theological and ecclesiological challenge and the responsibility of any one programme but is at the heart of all the work of the WCC. While some of the respondents said that the work of Faith and Order needs to be strengthened, there were other voices who affirmed the role of the WCC in fostering renewal and growth through unity, worship, mission and service.

The evaluation team therefore **recommends:**

8.3.A. That the WCC programmes continue to elaborate how the central task of the churches calling one another to visible unity translates into common witness.

8.3.B. That the theological undergirding of each programme be strengthened.

8.4. To keep in tension the work of dialogue and advocacy, of building relationships and promoting social witness among churches and with different sectors in society

The respondents affirmed the WCC as a critical space for holding together in tension the work of dialogue and advocacy. For some, their advocacy efforts for peace and justice are enhanced when the WCC joins hands with them and facilitates the opportunities for their concerns to be brought to the global arena. For others, the space created by the WCC to come together and dialogue on critical issues and to build synergies out of the divergent voices is of the same value.

Therefore, the evaluation team **recommends**:

8.4.A. That the role of the WCC as convener and enabler for promoting social witness be strengthened.

8.5 To bring a prophetic voice and witness to the world in addressing the urgent and turbulent issues of our times in a focused way

The respondents did affirm the WCC's role in bringing the prophetic voice and witness to the world. We also heard of the inflexibility of the programme structure and budget to respond to emergent issues which include political or religious conflicts, the call for urgent pastoral visits etc.

Therefore, the evaluation team **recommends**:

8.5.A. That a mechanism enabling flexibility in response to emergent needs be put in place.

8.6 To foster greater ownership and participation by the churches in building as much as possible on existing initiatives of the churches and partner organizations

Respondents affirmed those areas of work where the churches have been directly involved in the planning and implementation. They have also affirmed programmes where the churches have been informed of the initiatives that are taking place.

Being cognizant of the rapidly changing global context, the WCC needs to develop mechanisms to tap into already existing networks and expertise in the world for research and development to augment its work. So as to ensure even greater ownership of the WCC's programme work.

The evaluation team therefore **recommends**:

8.6.A. That mechanisms be put in place to ensure that the expertise available in the churches and other ecumenical constituencies become central to the programme planning and implementation without sacrificing the values that hold the ecumenical movement together in unity, such as inclusivity and diversity.

8.6.B. That mechanisms to monitor these processes be put in place at both the level of governance and staff leadership.

8.7 To communicate WCC activities to the churches and the world in a timely and imaginative way

In order to make the WCC programmes widely known to the constituency, cognizant of language and technological divides, the evaluation team **recommends:**

8.7.A That the WCC builds capacity for communicating its programme work in languages that are accessible to the churches and constituencies in order to build greater ownership of the work and make linkages with local priorities.

8.7.B. That an in-house communication strategy is needed that would enable a core message, vision, values, etc. to be shared. This would help raise the profile of the WCC. The strategy must make connections among all programmes, consistency in how these are imaged and communicated to the membership and public – with a thrust on professionalism and raising profile of why the WCC is engaged in this work.

9. Recommendation on planning, monitoring and evaluation

The report has offered critical recommendations which should inform future steps in PMER internalisation processes, as the decision is made to close down the P&I office in its present form. The evaluation team recommends that the PMER functions are strengthened under the continued leadership of the General Secretariat.

Appendix 1 - Planning monitoring and evaluation

The pre-Porto Alegre assembly external evaluation of WCC programmes in 2005 recommended to the central committee, “the building of a clear, well-functioning programme monitoring and evaluation mechanism that is principally a tool for joint learning, self analysis, reflection and improvement”.

The programme guidelines committee of the 9th assembly in Porto Alegre affirmed this recommendation in their report to the assembly and recommended the setting up of an office for planning monitoring and evaluation that would not only help in organizing work more effectively but would also provide for the WCC the following benefits:

- Enhanced qualitative approach to a way of working that embraces a learning culture;
- Ensure the relevance of WCC work based on clearly identified goals and objectives;
- Developed processes for priority-setting in the face of many challenging issues; competing agendas; and reduced staff and financial capacity;
- Collective action in planning monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure a holistic approach to programming in the WCC.

In addition, the finance committee of the assembly also recommended that “one-year objectives and expected outcomes be submitted for approval as part of three-year rolling plans” and that proper organization and processes be put in place.

Post-Porto Alegre, these recommendations have been implemented during the period being evaluated. Processes have focused on key elements: (i) a clear programmatic framework describing the coherence of the whole plan; (ii) processes for ensuring an organizational structure with appropriate staff as required; (iii) and processes and tools to organize and coordinate this collective work, (iv) clearly defined major achievements to take to the next assembly as a way to assess the seven-year period of work (between two assemblies).

The implementation of these processes have been particularly helpful in the interpretation of the assembly mandate and in setting a viable programme structure, with effective planning, evaluation and monitoring mechanisms. This is reflected in the summary of the WCC planning framework approved by the central committee at its meeting in September 2006.

The mid-term evaluation team asked programme directors and some programme executive staff the question “To what extent has the planning monitoring and evaluation processes helped you in your work?”

Their responses included the following:

- PMER has been useful in addressing duplication of work and running parallel programmes.
- It is not rigid enough; it is too “relaxed” was the word used.
- A challenge is how to translate into PMER work that cannot be made into a project, e.g. theological reflection. Need to work at conceptual differences between programmes, projects and activities.
- PMER has been both helpful and unhelpful. The following were cited as helpful – internal evaluations, regular updates on financial implications, planning and documentation.
- Unhelpful methodologies used: “one size fits all” templates, there needs to be openness to other tools.
- It was acknowledged that the results from evaluations are not related or integrated into making necessary changes, timing of evaluations are not in synchronization with ongoing projects.
- “The process feels obese, not lean”. It was described as “a recycling of information for donors”.

- It was suggested that in future this work be integrated into the directors' position supervised by the associate general secretary for programmes, however another director felt this task should not be located in the director's job, as it will take away the integration of work as it has been experienced thus far.
- PMER has not been internalized by all programme executives. Those who use it, recognize that it helps promoting integration and avoids duplication of work.

The above responses indicate that there is still some way to go in the internalization of PMER by staff. The WCC as a whole needs to recognize that these processes have been set in place not for the benefit of funding partners.

The value of good planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes can be an opportunity for staff to share the work they do and to be acknowledged for it. It also provides an opportunity through evaluation to identify what they have learnt in the work completed. PMER can enhance the common work, lead to greater integration into a one WCC programme and help staff to manage their time, ensure financial accountability and good practices. PMER must be seen as a tool that will increase the visibility of the WCC through the impact of its work.

The staff team in planning and integration have done an evaluation of PMER and learning on the WCC process and a report is available. The report has offered critical recommendations which should inform future steps in PMER internalisation processes, as decision is made to close down the P&I office in its present form, but to ensure that the PMER functions are strengthened under the continued leadership of the general secretariat.

In addition, continuing conversations on the following issues and questions should not be lost. A number of different questions regarding the use of PME for overall management of the World Council of Churches and the management of specific programmes must be clarified in order to ensure that the practice corresponds to the WCC's set of values. Some of these questions challenge established culture of the WCC, and the inherent resistance to change. These questions include:

- *Recognition of the theological grounding* for efficient planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting;
- *the question of indicators* – how to find measurable indicators for the success of programmes or activities. Is it relevant to define an indicator for the evolution of inter-religious dialogue? or for the evolution of human rights? or for discussion on common worship? or for the strengthening of the fellowship?
- *processes or projects* – the work in the WCC consists mainly in working through sustained and often lengthy "processes" where the result of an activity is not obvious in a limited time frame. It is not easy to reduce a process to some specific objectives and indicators.
- *how to plan for the unforeseen*, such as emerging crisis which require staff and financial resources to enable the WCC to respond in a timely manner.

In terms of principles, the PME methodology does not contradict the spirit of the WCC. It needs to be understood as a system for organizing work rather than a system that deviates from set objectives.

Appendix 2 - Source materials

The following contributed to the background of the process.

- The section on evaluation in the final report of the programme committee to the central committee at its meeting in September 2006.
- The recommendations from the programme guidelines committee (PGC) of the Porto Alegre assembly (2006) which identified seven basic principles to guide the WCC in setting its programme priorities in the future.
- The ECHOS commission on youth in the ecumenical movement has asked that the criteria of youth participation and their contributions be added in the evaluation of work.
- The contributions of the programmes to the major achievements to be taken to the assembly in 2013 (as per the programme plans 2009-2013 Summary).

The following were also made available to the evaluation team:

- Relevant WCC assembly, programme and executive committee guidelines and documents.
- Programme Plans 2007 – 2013.
- Central committee programme committee reports.
- WCC internal programme and project evaluation reports of 2007 and 2008.
- Report of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration meeting in Hofgeismar, Germany, 2008.

Appendix 3 – Analysis of questionnaires

A- Questionnaires sent

(sent out both by mail and e-mail:)

Europe: 162

Switzerland: 13

Internal (Ecumenical Center internal mail): 4

Overseas: 438

Total: 617

Details of the questionnaire recipients (617):

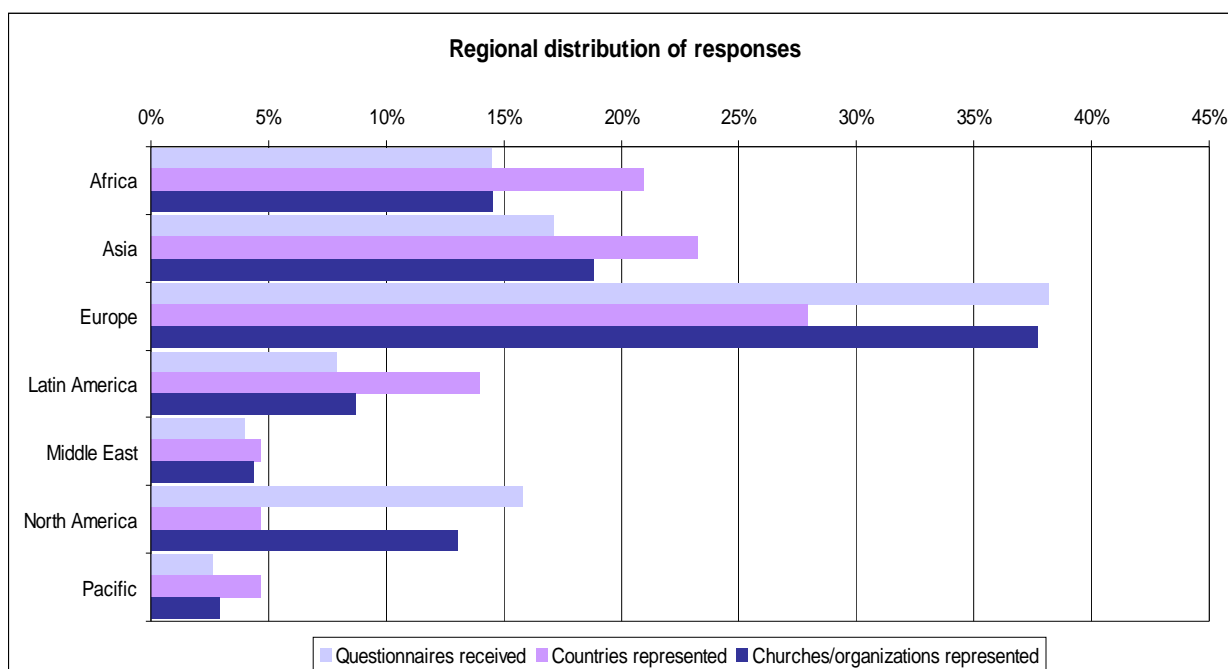
Confession / Network	Mailing list used	% vs. Total in list
African Instituted	11	3%
Anglican	49	14%
Baptist	29	8%
Free and independent	6	2%
Lutheran	79	23%
Mennonite	4	1%
Methodist	63	18%
Old-Catholic	7	2%
Orthodox (Eastern)	44	13%
Orthodox (Oriental)	17	5%
Reformed	130	37%
United and Uniting	38	11%
Subtotal by confession	516	84%
Christian world communions	8	2%
Ecumenical organizations and councils	18	5%
National councils of churches	50	14%
Networks	3	1%
Specialized ministries	14	4%
REO	8	2%
Total	617	

B- Questionnaires received

The reports of the phone interviews are included.

	Number of questionnaires received per region		Countries represented per region		Organizations represented per region	
		%		%		Organizations represented
Africa	11	14%	9	21%	10	14%
Asia	13	17%	10	23%	13	19%
Europe	29	38%	12	28%	26	38%
Latin America	6	8%	6	14%	6	9%
Middle East	3	4%	2	5%	3	4%
North America	12	16%	2	5%	9	13%
Pacific	2	3%	2	5%	2	3%
Total	76		43		69	

	Number of questionnaires sent per language		Number of questionnaires received per language	
		% of total		% of total
English	487	79%	61	80%
French	59	10%	7	9%
German	35	6%	5	7%
Spanish	36	6%	3	4%
Total	617		76	



Distribution of questionnaires by network (non-exclusive representation)

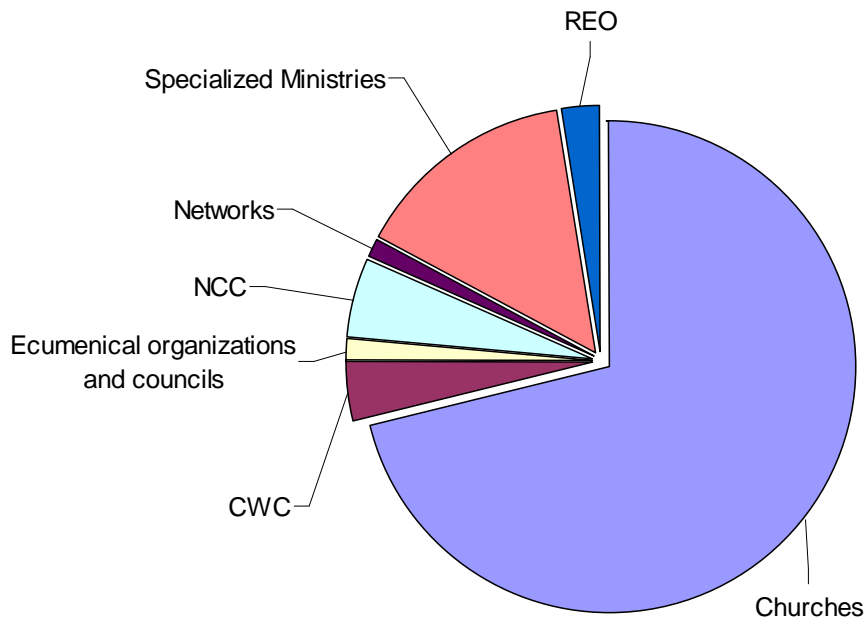
Member churches	39
Head of member churches	8
Ecumenical officers	12
Specialized ministries	11
CWC	3
NCC	4
REO	2
Church related mission	1
Educational institution	2

Governing bodies

Central committee member	21
Executive committee member	3
Permanent committee on consensus and collaboration	3
Programme committee core group	2
Presidents	1
Commissions	5
Advisory groups	9

Confession / Network	Questionnaires received	% vs. Total received
African instituted	1	1%
Anglican	6	8%
Baptist	1	1%
Free and independent	3	4%
Lutheran	9	12%
Mennonite	1	1%
Methodist	5	7%
Old-Catholic	1	1%
Orthodox (Eastern)	1	1%
Orthodox (Oriental)	3	4%
Reformed	14	18%
United and Uniting	9	12%
Subtotal by confession (churches)	54	71%
CWC	3	4%
Ecumenical organizations and councils	1	1%
NCC	4	5%
Networks	1	1%
Specialized ministries	11	14%
REO	2	3%
Total	76	

Distribution of questionnaires received



Details of the distribution (cf. the churches represented on the precedent chart)

Distribution of questionnaires by confession

