

Document No **7**

For Discussion

FUNCTIONS OF THE GOVERNING BODIES

The purpose of this document in listing the main functions of the governing bodies is threefold:

- *to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different governing bodies in order to enable members, and in particular new members to accomplish their tasks more effectively;*
- *to clarify the distinct roles and responsibilities of different committees or sub-committees which may address the same issues from different perspectives and to identify points of collaboration between the various committees;*
- *to prepare for a process of self-evaluation by each of the governing bodies. (ref.doc. 7.2)*

Introduction: According to its constitution, the World Council of Churches has the authority to offer counsel and provide opportunity for united action in matters of common interest. It may take action on behalf of constituent churches only in such matters as one or more of them may commit to it and only on behalf of such churches. The World Council shall not legislate for the churches; nor shall it act for them in any manner except as indicated above or as may be specified by the constituent churches.

Additionally the constitution states that the World Council of Churches shall discharge its functions through an assembly, a central committee, an executive committee, and other subordinate bodies as may be established. (From Sections IV and V of the constitution)

Within the terms of the constitution which grants the due authority and defines the organisational framework, the following are the functions of the governing bodies at different levels. In summary:

- The officers **monitor** the life and work of the WCC. For this purpose the officers will receive regular updates, with requests for advice where necessary on issues that require guidance or action.
- The executive committee **prepares for decisions** of the central committee. For this purpose the executive committee will receive regular progress reports which give an account of the work and other matters, or point to issues that call for the executive committee's action.
- The central committee **decides** upon policies, programmes and adopts budgets. For this purpose the central committee will receive reports from the commissions and reports and recommendations from the committees. In this context, the central committee may also receive reports from staff on certain results and developments in programme work, and/or reports on the implementation of specific prior decisions.

1. The officers

(The tasks of the officers are not specified in the Rules – the following are tasks which emerge out of customary practice. The officers are elected by the Central Committee and function as trustees of the member churches).

- Monitor the life and work of the WCC and accompany the general secretary in his/her role as chief executive officer giving support and advice
- Receive interim reports on programmes and finance and offer advice to the staff
- Finalise decisions on behalf of the executive committee
- In exceptional circumstances take decisions (to be ratified by the executive or central committees)
- Make public statements in accordance with stated policies of the WCC
- Prepare the agenda of the executive committee
- Appoint staff as authorised by the executive committee
- Make other administrative decisions between executive committee meetings, in particular where these have been expressly delegated by the executive committee, and report to the executive committee.

1.1 The moderator

- Makes public statements on his/her own authority.
- Ensures the spirit of collegiality among the officers.
- Stays in close contact with the General Secretary, keeping himself/herself informed and updated about developments in the life of the WCC informing, in his/her turn, the two vice-moderators.
- Accompanies the General Secretary in situations where a reconciling role is required.

2. The executive committee (based on Rule VIII)

- Prepares for decisions of the central committee
- Receives interim reports and oversees the work
- Approves the agenda of the central committee
- Supervises the operation of the budget
- Makes limited public statements in accordance with stated policies of the WCC
- Appoints staff and reports to the central committee
- Reports to the central committee
- In a calendar year in which the central committee does not meet, acts as the delegate of the central committee in appointing auditors, ratifying annual financial reports.
- When the central committee does not meet in the third quarter of a year, acts as the delegate of central committee in adopting the budget for the following year.

3. The central committee (based on Article V.2 of the Constitution and Rule VI)

- Takes decisions on policies and structural issues
- Decides to initiate or terminate programmes and activities
- Adopts the budget
- Makes public statements
- Elects members of consultative bodies and executive staff
- Elects the general secretary, the deputy general secretary, and the associate general secretaries.
- Reports to the Assembly
- Appoints auditors; ratifies the annual financial report

3.1 The programme committee (based on Rule X)

- Ensures that policy decisions of the central committee are adhered to in deciding programmes
- Prepares for decisions of the central committee on programmes within approved budgets; proposes evaluation of all programmes
- Meets with the finance committee to ensure programme recommendations are being considered in the context of the available budget, and to ensure coherence in recommendations arising from the committees
- Proposes to the nominations committee the formation of commissions/their mandate, size, composition etc.

3.2 The finance committee (based on Rule XI)

- Prepares for the central committee's consideration recommendations on policy matters concerning finance, services and administration, including in particular income development strategies, policies concerning membership contributions, general reserves and investments
- Proposes to the central committee the budget for the following calendar year, and the framework budget for the subsequent year
- Works with the programme committee to ensure that programme recommendations are considered within the context of the available budget.
- Appoints members of the audit committee
- Presents to the central committee the annual financial report, issues raised by the auditors, or by the audit committee, and, if significant, the results of stewardship reviews conducted by staff
- Proposes to central committee the audit firm to be appointed for the calendar year.

3.3 The nominations committee (based on Rule VII)

- Proposes to the central committee lists of names for commissions etc – respecting all the balances as per approved policies
- Proposes to the central committee names for the appointment of staff

3.4 The policy reference committee In the Rules there is no explicit mention of this committee. Rule VI.4. a) 6) stipulates that “reference committee or committees” are appointed as needed.

- Prepares for the central committee policy decisions on membership matters
- Prepares for the central committee decisions on institutional strategies on relationships with ecumenical partners
- Proposes connections between programmes and relationships

3.5 The public issues committee (in the Rules there is no explicit mention of this committee. Rule VI.4. a) 6) stipulates that committees are appointed as needed)

- Provides the central committee with a analysis of the general political situation in the world
- Prepares for the central committee policy decisions on international affairs
- Proposes connections between programmes and international affairs when applicable
- Prepares for public statements by the central committee