

Document No 8

For Action

PROGRAMME REPORT

1. **For discussion: follow-up to matters raised by the executive committee**

- a) “Vision and Purpose of the Work of the World Council of Churches” (cf. pp. 7-14, WCC Plans 2008-2013 – Summary”)
- b) “Participation of churches in development and advocacy” (**Doc No 8.1**)
- c) “WCC Programmes 2007-2009: Partnership with churches and other organizations” (**Doc No 8.2**)

2. **For discussion: matters arising from programmatic activities**

- a) The 25th anniversary of the document on Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry and the new edition of the text (introduction by Metropolitan Vassilios, F&O Moderator)

3. **For action: requested actions by the executive committee**

- a) Approval of the document “WCC Plans 2008-2013 – Summary with project outlines 2008-2010” (*Note: The latest version of budgets for programme activities will be presented as part of the finance documents, the figures included in the booklet being already outdated. Hence, two actions will be requested: one on the narrative part of the programme reports, and one on budgets*).
- b) Anticipate potential difficulties in the central committee in taking decisions about major mission events in 2010 and 2011 and offer guidance to staff for preparing such decisions (cf. paragraph reporting on CWME in this document).
- c) Indicate priority regarding the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) venue, respectively the region (cf. paragraph reporting on IEPC in this document).

4. **For information: an update since the last executive committee**

The new structure is in place and new ways of working have been established and are functioning. In most programmes, the planned activities are underway and staff have adjusted to the new way of working. Monthly reports from the directors to the SLG ensure that the work is being monitored regularly. As part of the planning, monitoring, evaluating and reporting cycle (approved by the executive committee) the programme work was monitored by the Planning and Integration Office with the project teams. Matters that needed attention were brought to the Staff Leadership Group. The SLG spent a whole day in reviewing the work and identifying issues that need follow-up.

A staff group on the change process (named by the general secretary with representatives of staff at all levels) has provided some useful suggestions and this is being followed up.

The discussion on the vision and purpose of the WCC was closely associated with a process set in place to determine fifteen major achievements that all the programmes need to contribute to, so as to prepare in a more focused way for the next assembly. The planning process has taken these into account and will engage the member churches and other ecumenical partners in owning achievements and contributing to them as their own preparations for the assembly.

The Director for Diakonia, Justice and Creation joined the staff in July, together with the Director of Communication who has begun to work towards the development of a comprehensive communication strategy.

5. For information: only a few activities from a rich harvest

Here you receive highlights of a few activities – a full report will be presented to the central committee, along with the reports from the consultative bodies, which would have all met once by the time of the CC.

With regard to the activities reported here, three underlying factors could be highlighted at this stage:

- (a) the consultative bodies – commissions and joint consultative groups – have started functioning and offering advice to governing bodies and staff;
- (b) there is a considerable number of activities carried in cooperation with ecumenical partners (WACC; EWN, etc.);
- (c) there are certain completely new activities marking the post-Porto Alegre era (Youth Body; Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum, etc.).

• *JWG Executive Committee*

The new Joint Working Group Executive Committee met in March at Bossey under the leadership of Archbishop Nifon and Archbishop Martin. The group reviewed the Eighth Report, noting the need to continue to address the following four priority areas: spiritual ecumenism, ecumenical formation, church-dividing social issues and interreligious dialogue. The group also noted the need to follow-up on the studies “Inspired by the Same Vision”, “Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Common Baptism” and “The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue”.

The group identified three challenges that reach beyond the Eighth Report, presenting themselves as new priorities, including the centenary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, cooperation on the Decade to Overcome Violence and the implications of the Special Commission on Orthodox participation in the WCC for WCC-Roman Catholic relations.

A major methodological concern was raised about the reception and impact of the work of the JWG on the lives of the churches. It was agreed to give special attention to this in the coming period. The group agreed to prepare two plenary meetings in 2008, in recognition of the pause since the last plenary met in 2005. The first plenary will be held in Rome in January 2008 to coincide with celebrations of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. A second plenary will take place in Geneva in November 2008.

• *AGAPE process meeting with specialised ministries*

The purpose of this meeting (Geneva, April 2007) was to receive input and hear perspectives and commitments that will enrich the way forward in the AGAPE process and to reflect on what is unique in the contributions of the WCC and the ecumenical family, especially regarding the strengthening of the spiritual grounding of the AGAPE process and the common ecumenical engagement.

The meeting consisted of a presentation of the AGAPE process, its relationship with WCC programme plans for the coming years and reactions from participants in written and oral form. After presentations from the

WCC, the specialized agencies, churches and ecumenical organizations present, two groups were formed to discuss a *Framework of Cooperation* and the *Spiritual Grounding* of the AGAPE process. This was the outcome of the meeting. There was an agreement of cooperation particularly in implementing the eight actions of the AGAPE call made at the Porto Alegre assembly.

- ***Inclusive and Just Communities***

In April, the four streams making up the new project – racism, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples and EDAN – met to reflect together on the theological agenda which common to them all, producing a challenging theological paper, on the basis of which a core working group met in August in Bossey to plan common activities for the next years.

- ***Commission on World Mission and Evangelism***

The newly elected commission met in Geneva (20-26 April 2007), under the leadership of its moderator, Bishop Geevarghese Mor Coorilos. It includes delegates from member churches of the Council as well as from the Roman Catholic Church, the World Evangelical Alliance and the Pentecostals, Christian bodies not in full membership of the WCC.

The commission emphasized the importance of new work on evangelism, expressed eagerness to collaborate in the interreligious process leading towards a code of conduct on conversion, to cooperate with the Faith and Order Commission on questions of mission and unity and in particular on the study document, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, and to continue ecumenical work on health and healing consistent with the 2005 Athens mission conference's deliberations on the theme "*Come, Holy Spirit – Heal and Reconcile: Called in Christ to be reconciling and healing communities*".

The commission accepted to be involved with all other "2010 stakeholders" (CWC's, the World Evangelical Alliance, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation, the Roman Catholic Church through PCPCU, Pentecostal representatives, internationally organised mission bodies, WSCF, local churches in Scotland and the UK, etc.) in preparing a common celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. That celebration will be an event with similar partners as the ones participating in the Global Christian Forum. Agenda, priorities, programme, speakers and outcomes will be negotiated among all stakeholders representing different views on and priorities in mission. The WCC, despite its heavy involvement in the 2010 preparations, will be only one among many organisations who will be responsible for the 2010 Edinburgh conference. Unlike WCC which is in a certain sense indirectly the institutional inheritor of the Edinburgh conference, many other international bodies involved in mission will organise their own major celebration in 2010, in particular the major Lausanne III conference planned for Autumn 2010 in South Africa. This is done in addition to their participation in the common Edinburgh event.

The question for CWME was how to connect its participation in the wide forum-type event of Edinburgh 2010 with the need to work more specifically at what is requested from WCC until 2013, i.e. "member churches and ecumenical bodies have reached common understandings on key ecumenical convictions on the theology and practice of mission and evangelism" (cf. major achievement 3). The commission did not think that Edinburgh 2010 could enable the WCC to achieve this. So it developed the proposal to organise later, perhaps around November 2011 (50 years after New Delhi and the integration between IMC and WCC) a CWME conference to take stock of the process and debates around 2010, as well as of the mission-relevant aspects of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC), and prepare some key ecumenical convictions on mission and evangelism to be shared at the assembly. The end of 2011 as a date would have the advantage of symbolically marking the importance of the link between church and mission (remembering the integration!), a key element of an ecumenical mission theology.

The commission also indicated, however, that the date of a CWME conference could be postponed to 2012, provided the assembly would take place in the second half of 2013. It also indicated that a world mission conference need not be of the same size as the previous ones. In history there had been smaller meetings classified as such (in particular during the time of the IMC). It also hoped for a conference with much more youth participation than the former ones.

The commission is aware of the difficulty of proposing several consecutive important public events / conferences within a short period of time. Its concern however is to find a way to work towards a common

understanding on mission as WCC-related bodies (including the wider constituency) and WCC member churches. Such a mission conference would be a WCC-fellowship or WCC-owned event (in that sense not like the Global Christian Forum or Edinburgh 2010).

Having heard that the commission's proposal might raise concerns in the WCC fellowship, the question put to the executive committee is to share potential reactions to that proposal, so as to enable staff and commissioners, if necessary, to work on an alternative proposal.

- ***Protecting and sharing worship resources***

Many churches, individuals and Christian and ecumenical organizations are facing challenges when dealing with intellectual property rights. They are struggling with the complexity of copyright laws and the restrictions they face when they want to use liturgical resources in a worship setting or publish non-profit material for churches. From 25 April to 1 May 2007 a group of seven people representing World Alliance of Christian Communicators (WACC) and WCC met at the Methodist University of São Paulo, Brazil to draft a booklet on the issue of intellectual property and copyrights with regard to worship resources. The document aims at giving some direction and guidelines in this task of searching for alternatives to the current situation. It is an effort to raise questions and clarify some possible solutions and alternatives and to promote a culture of sharing. It is hoped that the text would be released to churches in the second half of 2007 and to distribute it in various ways through WACC and WCC networks and on the internet.

- ***Joint Consultative Commission between the WCC and CWCs***

The commission met for the first time in Geneva on 10 May 2007, under the leadership of its moderator, Bishop Nareg Amezian, from the Armenian Apostolic Church (See of Cilicia) and of the present moderator of the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions, Rev. Dr Robert K. Welsh, from the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council.

The commission considered the feasibility of providing space for CWCs in an expanded assembly and expressed its commitment to mapping deeper programmatic cooperation between the WCC and CWCs. Early in the term of the current WCC central committee, a decision is expected as to whether the next WCC assembly should be structured so as to gather the churches and offer expanded space to partner ecumenical organizations.

The commission affirmed the need to continue creative dialogue on the possible formats that might allow different communions to take advantage of an expanded WCC assembly, but also noted some hesitations about the feasibility of such an event based on the varying forms of communion governance. The commission highlighted the need to further define the nature, style, participation and theological grounding of such an event, offering helpful suggestions for guiding criteria.

- ***Youth Body***

Young people representing churches and ecumenical youth organizations gathered in Geneva, Switzerland (May, 2007) for the first 'Youth Body' meeting. In this first meeting, the group was mandated to name itself – the term 'Youth Body' being a working name until the group was officially formed. After some discussion and theological reflection, preference was given to the name *Echos - Commission on youth in the ecumenical movement*, a name rooted in a biblical theme and understood in many languages. Echos is the transliterated word from the Greek word, *ἠχος*, meaning sound.

During the meeting, the Youth Body had significant and fruitful discussions with ecumenical officers from the churches, who were also meeting in Geneva, and with WCC staff.

Echos recognizes the importance of broadening and strengthening existing networks and groups, while stressing the need for intergenerational partnerships in the ecumenical movement. While Echos will work for renewal in the worldwide ecumenical movement and try to recapture the urgency of unity among Christians, its members have also recognized the importance of bringing a mutual exchange between the WCC and grassroots level of the churches. Echos will look to find new ways of collaboration within the WCC member churches, but will also try to connect with churches currently outside the ecumenical movement. Its members will be good ambassadors at home, and will share some of the realities on the ground with others.

Until the next WCC assembly, Echos has identified four areas of focus for our work: (a) ecumenical formation; (b) networking and communication; (c) collaboration (e.g. with WCC staff, CWME in view of Edinburgh); and (d) youth engagement (e.g. on DOV).

- ***Ecumenical Water Network (EWN)***

The conference “Churches for Water in Africa” was held on 21-25 May in Entebbe, Uganda. It gathered nearly seventy participants including church leaders, theologians, water experts and project coordinators, from nineteen African countries as well as from Europe and Latin America to discuss the role of churches in the face of the water crisis in Africa. It was organized by the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) in cooperation with the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Uganda-based Agency for Corporation and Research in Development (ACORD).

Participants at the conference urged governments and multilateral institutions to respect the human right to water and meet their obligations regarding its provision. They noted that, in spite of promises made in the context of the Millennium Development Goals, in rural Africa 65% of the population lack access to sufficient and safe water supply and 73% to adequate sanitation.

Participants from churches and faith organizations affirmed water as cradle and source of life, and an expression of God’s grace in perpetuity for the whole of creation. They asserted that faith-based groups were called upon to exercise responsible stewardship, preserve and share it, for the benefit of humanity and creation.

The Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) will facilitate continued dialogue among the conference participants, and broaden it to include other churches and church-related organizations. A number of follow-up workshops are planned for 2008.

- ***International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC)***

Since the February meeting of the executive committee the preparatory process for the IEPC has been further clarified and consolidated. There are three mutually reinforcing activities that deserve to be highlighted: expert consultations, peace declarations, and living letters.

An Orthodox consultation on “Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Peace” took place at the Orthodox Academy in Volos, Greece, in May 2007 and a brief report on this event is in the next section. Other meetings planned for this year include consultations on “Healing of Memories – Reconciling Communities” (Dominican Retreat Centre Tallaght, Dublin, October 2007), on “Poverty, Wealth and Ecology” (Dar-es-salam, Tanzania, November 2007), on “Responsibility to Protect” (Protestant Academy, Arnoldshain, Germany, November 2007), and a workshop on “Spirituality of Peace” (Focolare Centre in Baar, Switzerland, December 2007).

With regard to peace declarations, some 300 letters have been sent to seminaries, Bible study centres and universities with the aim of inviting groups of students together with their professors to write their own peace declarations. Although roughly twenty-five positive responses have been received, efforts for getting more academic groups engaged require sustained efforts.

At the same time, work has begun to invite groups and individuals at the local levels, in congregations, youth committees and Bible study groups, to write their own peace declaration. The aim is to provoke a wide process of conscientization around the issues of peace at all levels of the churches’ life.

The first Living Letters team visit, to Sri Lanka, took place from 4-14 August. The second, to the USA, has been set for 14-24 September. Preparations for the fifteen team visits envisaged for 2008 are in the early stage. Close collaboration with the project on nurturing relationships with member churches (P103) is secured and very helpful. In general, the idea of sending “Living Letters” to the member churches meets with great approval. They are the “human faces” providing the exchange between the WCC’s peace agenda and the peace experiences of the churches.

A leaflet on the IEPC is now available in English, French, German and Spanish. A study guide is being prepared to be available later in the year. Meditation and worship materials are also being developed for

2008-2009 to enable churches to become part of the IEPC preparatory process. A general public communication strategy is being developed together with Communication.

Finally, with regard to the venue of the Peace Convocation, it has proven impossible to bring to the executive committee a proposal. Invitations have been received from Sri Lanka and Boston, MA in the USA. The South Africa Council of Churches has shown great interest in having the IEPC in South Africa. Although there is considerable interest in bringing the IEPC to a place in the Middle East, neither Beirut nor Amman have thus far shown to be suitable venues. For a variety of reasons it would be desirable to arrive at a decision concerning the venue as soon as possible, at the latest at the February meeting of central committee. Therefore, a clear indication of the preferred region for the IEPC from the executive committee would be welcome.

- ***International conference on "Forgiveness, Peace and Reconciliation"***

17-20 May 2007, fifty Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and Protestant Christians from Europe and the United States met in Volos, Greece, for a discussion of "Forgiveness, Peace and Reconciliation." The conference was organized by the Volos Academy for Theological Studies in collaboration with the Boston Theological Institute and the WCC. The event was a contribution of the Church of Greece to the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence programme, whose particular focus this year is on Europe.

In their presentations, the speakers looked at various aspects of the conference theme. A panel of speakers from Cyprus, Serbia, Russia and the Middle East discussed Orthodoxy in situations of conflict. Members of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship, the St. Egidio Community in Rome and the Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland participated in a concluding round table on "Christian Churches Contributing to a Culture of Peace".

- ***"Thinking Together"***

The multi-religious group of scholars, clergy, educators with representatives of the five major religions, known as "Thinking Together", met in Bossey in June for a planning meeting on various dimensions to be reckoned with on the chosen topic "inter-faith considerations on conversion and apostasy". This process goes in tandem with the project on a code of conduct on conversion involving jointly Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and the WCC's IRRD Office (see below). An outline for a book on the topic as well as a schedule for implementation was discussed.

- ***Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA)***

In April the new project coordinator took over the running of the initiative, and the new Lusophone regional coordinator started in May. The evaluation report five years after the launching of EHAIA was submitted in May.

An Inter-Regional Reference Groups (IRRGs) meeting that brought together all the four Regional Reference Groups (RRGs) for the first was held on 19-21 June in Nairobi, Kenya. Both the evaluation report and the meeting in Nairobi acknowledged that the churches in Africa have come a long way in responding to HIV and AIDS pandemic but highlighted that the main objective to "overcome stigma and discrimination" still stands in many countries. It was observed that gender inequality, sexual violence and harmful cultural practices continue to contribute to the rapid spread of HIV infection, especially among women and girls.

Participants called upon men to become more involved in being part of the solution in halting the spread of HIV infection and in the ministry of care-giving that has overstretched the women in the homes and in the churches. Participants at the Nairobi meeting strongly recommended that EHAIA vigorously promote gender justice and positive cultural practices. Emphasis was put on theological reflection that is biblically grounded and theologically sound in addressing gender inequality and sexual violence. Both reports expressed great concern that lack of financial resources is hindering effective response from many churches that carry out HIV and AIDS ministry in countries that are barely recovering from civil wars, ethnic conflicts, genocide and extreme poverty. A careful reading of both reports shows that there is critical need for a contextual, holistic and community-centered approach to the multi-sectoral dynamics of the pandemic.

- ***Sub-continental youth interfaith meeting***

With the aim of “Strengthening Inter-religious Trust and Respect” and responding to the spiritual yearning among young people a sub-continental youth inter-faith meeting took place at the Fireflies Ashram in Bangalore, India (June 2007), in collaboration with the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress (FPH) from Switzerland. The meeting aimed at promoting exchange between young adults on themes related to religious identities and the construction of meaning in pluralist societies.

Young adults from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka gathered in Bangalore for two weeks to reflect on the role of religion and religious identity in a context of tension and communalism. The meeting had a twofold focus, during the first week, the young people learned about the ashram’s activities on sustainable development in relation to children's rights, women's empowerment, Dalit human rights and environmental issues. The second week was dedicated to the question how young people today can make sense of religious traditions, and what these can mean for a relevant religious life in the various contexts that participants come from.

- ***Faith and Order standing commission***

The standing commission met at the Villa Notre Dame, Crans-Montana, Switzerland, from 12-18 June 2007 under the leadership of its moderator, Metropolitan Vassilios of Constantia.

The commission planned further work on the understanding of the church and its mission in the world, on baptism, on ethical decision-making processes in the churches, and on the churches’ differing understandings of authority (specifically on sources of authority) and how it should be exercised. Several cooperative ventures were affirmed, including work with united churches and Christian world communions as well as with the CWME and the WCC programme on inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. Faith and Order’s cooperative role (with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) in preparing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was strongly affirmed.

Among the highpoints of the meeting was a prayerful commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the publication of the landmark ecumenical text *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, and its sending to the churches for response “at the highest appropriate level”. Two other highpoints were encounters with national and local churches and ecumenical bodies in the meeting’s host country, Switzerland. The Commission heard from Thomas Wipf, President of the Swiss Federation of Protestant Churches (FEPS), and his colleagues about the ecumenical situation in Switzerland and FEPS work on a wide range of issues including baptism. Martin Hoegger, president of the Christian Council of Vaud, brought the 75th anniversary (2002) of the First Faith and Order Conference in Lausanne vividly alive again, and showed the important influence such a celebration had on the vibrant local ecumenical situation in that city.

- ***Churches together for peace and justice in the Middle East***

Representatives of WCC member churches and related organizations from six continents, including some of the most senior church leaders of the Middle East, and WCC – 130 participants altogether – met in Amman, Jordan (17-21 June 2007) for an international peace conference. Under the heading “Churches together for Peace and Justice in the Middle East”, the meeting heard from the churches of the region and from other churches with experience of endemic conflict and violence, including Colombia, Sri Lanka and South Africa.

The conference concluded by launching the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum and issuing the “Amman Call”. The declaration called the forum to be guided by three imperatives: (a) the ethical imperative for a just peace, (b) the ecumenical imperative for unity in action, and (c) the Gospel imperative for costly solidarity. In a special inauguration ceremony at the traditional site of Christ’s baptism, participants in the meeting planted on the banks of the Jordan river as a symbol of peace an olive tree donated by Palestinian Christians.

Following the conference, a four-person delegation led by the general secretary visited Jerusalem (21-26 June). The delegation met with the heads of local churches, government officials, civil society organizations and local parish and community members. The delegation got a first-hand introduction to the work of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine/Israel (EAPPI), met the mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine and the two chief rabbis of Israel. Education for peace and interreligious cooperation were on the

agenda, and has also visited Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem, and Muslim and Jewish holy sites in Jerusalem and Hebron.

- ***AGAPE Reference Group on Poverty Wealth and Ecology: Impact of Economic Globalization***

The meeting which took place in Geneva (25-26 June 2007) had three main agenda items: (a) discuss the theological bases for studying the links between poverty, wealth and ecology in the context of WCC's AGAPE process and the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC); (b) receive the initial findings of the study on PWE in Africa and to advise accordingly how further work in this area can be further improved; and (c) provide guidance to the WCC on how to plan the churches' encounter on PWE with a focus on Africa that will take place in Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania in November 2007 as well as advise the WCC on the overall PWE plan as outlined from 2007 to 2011.

For purposes of clarification, the meeting reiterated the terms of reference (TOR) of the reference group on PWE as well as considered the relationship between the PWE framework and the WCC's AGAPE process. The theological concepts of poverty, wealth and ecology from "Ubuntu" and the Orthodox perspectives were discussed. This was followed by presentation of preliminary findings of the study of poverty, wealth and ecology in Africa.

- ***Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation***

The first meeting of the newly constituted commission took place at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, 27-30 June 2007, under the leadership of its moderator, Professor Isabel Phiri.

The commission was given direction on its advisory role, its task to ensure that the work of ecumenical formation – a work the assembly had designated as of prime importance – happens in a coherent manner within a single strategic plan, and its specific role in advising on developing the educational and formative potential of all the programmes of the WCC.

The commission sought to set itself a realistic programme of work for the future. It looked at how each of the programme areas could best express and embody directions appropriate to the challenges it had received. The principal of those challenges was the range of ideas and needs for ecumenical formation bubbling up around the world, and the role of the commission in capturing those needs and developing some conceptual clarity about ecumenical formation.

The commission decided that its own members should engage together in a listening and visioning process, involving each in his or her own context and shaping the form of much of the commission's next meeting. Commissioners are encouraged to engage with a small number of local congregations, communities and organizations, primarily in their immediate local context but also drawing on wider national or regional networks, to listen to their needs, stories and perceptions. Each will also ensure they include those working with children, youth and adults, whether separately or inter-generationally. The next meeting will be structured to bring these findings together in a creative way and use them as we move towards developing a clearer statement and understanding.

The commission proceeded to adopt a draft set of by-laws, which the central committee would be invited to approve.

- ***Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)***

The Global Forum on Migration and Development met for the first time in Brussels, Belgium, from 6-9 July 2007. Representatives of African, European and Middle Eastern churches, church-related organizations and ecumenical bodies working on migration issues and associated with the WCC came together to "signal an end to overall restrictive migration policies in the North" while "replacing them by a debate on the positive impact of migration". They also made a number of recommendations for the GFMD to be successful, including the need to develop a "coherent and binding body of international rights of migrants".

Labeled as an informal, voluntary and state-led global forum, the GFMD comprises two interrelated parts: a meeting of civil society actors and a discussion by government representatives. The global forum is not a decision-making process but a platform for policymakers to share information, good practices and policies

regarding migration and development, and to explore new initiatives for international cooperation and partnerships.

- ***Inter-faith Summer School at Bossey***

For the first time, Bossey's July's summer school brought together 21 young Jews, Muslims and Christians from all over the world and afforded them the opportunity to get to know each other – including each other's spirituality. Friendships forged during the seminar have played an important role in the learning process for the participants. It has allowed for frank discussions during daily lectures and workshops, even when touching on difficult issues like politics and gender.

The fact that the young adults lived together for one month under the same roof, sharing moments at the beach and in the kitchen as well as hours in the conference room, was essential to what those who took part in it call "a unique experience".

Discussions drew on the strong presence of local religious expertise from all three Abrahamic faiths including lecturers from the universities of Geneva and Lausanne, and also saw contributions by international specialists. Their diverse backgrounds shed a light on divisions existing within each faith group and introduced students to both Sunni and Shiite Islam, Orthodox as well as reformed Judaism and the great variety of Christian denominations.

The young people's readiness to uncover the roots of their own religion and become Christians, Jews and Muslims in a deeper sense was greeted at the closing ceremony by the three academics who, together with the institute's director, had dreamed up the interreligious summer school three years ago.

Rabbi Marc Raphaël Guedj, former chief rabbi of Geneva and president of the foundation Roots and Sources (Racines et Sources), Hafid Ouardiri, president of the Interknowing Foundation (Ta'aruf) for the promotion of knowledge about Islam among non-Muslims, and WCC staff for interreligious relations and dialogue, called this premiere, which Ouardiri described as "spiritual free-diving", a success to be repeated in the coming years.

- ***Intra-Christian Consultation on "Towards a Code of Conduct on Conversion"***

Launched in May 2006 in Lariano-Velletri, near Rome, the study project on "Interreligious reflection on conversion: from controversy to a shared code of conduct" made another step in Toulouse, France, 8-12 August 2007. Organized by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the WCC Office on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, the intra-Christian consultation gathered some thirty Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostal and Evangelical theologians and church leaders from Europe, Asia, Africa and the United States, to outline the content of the code of conduct, which is expected to be finalized by 2010.

Among the issues identified by the participants as elements upon which the code of conduct should be based are: common understandings of conversion, witness, mission and evangelism, and concern for human dignity; a distinction between aggressive proselytizing and evangelism; the balance between the mandate to evangelize and the right to choose one's religion.

One of the achieved goals of the consultation was that representatives from all walks of Christian life have been able to meet and discuss such a complex issue, starting to build a consensus, which is in itself a success. The next step in this study project will be a meeting in 2008 in which the code of conduct will be drafted, building upon the findings of the Toulouse consultation.

- ***Transforming Theology, Life-giving Civilization and Ecumenism in the 21st Century: Ubuntu meets Sangsaeng***

Thirty-five theologians and practitioners from Asia, Africa and other parts of the world, met in Changseong, Korea, 12-17 August 2007, to explore together the contribution of *Ubuntu* and *Sangsaeng* in relation to theology, life giving civilization and ecumenism in the 21st century, under the theme "Transforming Theology and Life Giving Civilization".

The consultation was held at Hanmaum Community, which is a community born out of the movement of the farmers' struggle for social justice and democracy in Korea. The community is an example of *Ubuntu* and *Sangsaeng*, as it seeks to be connected with nature and with other members of society in creative and life-ways.

Participants learnt that *Ubuntu* and *Sangsaeng*, as exemplifying African and Asian paradigms of life-giving forces, call them into harmony with one another and with God's creation. Resonating with the biblical concept of *koinonia*, they received *Ubuntu* and *Sangsaeng* as necessary resources for the struggle with the critical issues of theology, civilization and ecumenism in the 21st century. At the end of the consultation they came up with a statement with specific recommendations that call for exploring a theological basis for a wider ecumenism and that offer a basis for a holistic life of social justice as expressed by *Sansaeng* and *Ubuntu*. Participants were aware that these concepts should not be romanticised but researched too.

"The convergence of *Ubuntu* and *Sangsaeng* highlights the conviviality and relationality of all God's creation, while offering a possibility of reflecting, analyzing and protecting life based on the *Ubuntu* principle 'I am because you are, you are because I am.' Both these principles are about the eradication of hate, anger, private wealth without sharing, oppression, exploitation as well as harmony and peace with the cosmos," said the statement.