

WCC Executive Committee to focus on unity



The WCC Executive Committee. © Marianne Ejdersten/WCC

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The World Council of Churches (WCC) Executive Committee is meeting at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey this week from 7-12 June, focusing on unity, renewal of the WCC strategic plan and financial strategy, the building project, preparations for the 11th Assembly and observance of WCC's 70th anniversary.

In words of welcome to the Executive Committee, Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator of the WCC Central Committee, acknowledged that the meeting was taking place in the context of a turbulent world characterized by fear of the known and unknown, desperation and a sense of hopelessness.

Abuom mentioned the Churches' Commitment to Children, awareness of the pivotal role of religion, spirits of fear and division unleashed, and narratives of hope amid challenges.

"Amidst the challenges and tribulations, we are challenged to manage transitions in ways that will ensure the ecumenical movement keeps moving in the right direction according to the purposes for which it was founded and of course informed by the contemporary circumstances," she said. "Our deliberations and decisions should contribute to a vibrant, vital and coherent fellowship of men and women with a shared vision."

Times of unity

In his report to the Executive Committee, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit noted that we are living in a time when the purpose and the objectives of the WCC are highly relevant.

Based on these realities, there is a need for a new search for unity, he said.

“Through the many dimensions of its work, the WCC contributes to the unity of the church, and the unity that the WCC is able to express, in turn, contributes to the unity of humankind.”

“The many expressions of polarization, greater gaps between rich and poor, extremism and violence, worries about the future of the planet Earth and withdrawal of accountability for our common home and future create a constant call upon what we stand for, what we can do, and what our values and vision are,” Tveit reflected.

This comes to the surface in the efforts to pursue a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, he said. “There are so many contexts, so many people who long and struggle for more justice, for reconciliation and peace that can bring new light and new hope into their lives.”

“There is a willingness in the WCC constituencies and beyond, in the Roman Catholic Church, in the World Evangelical Alliance, among Pentecostal churches and others to seek a united witness and a common service for those who need us to unite our agendas and resources for those who need our attention the most.”

“The unity of the church and the unity of humankind are interconnected,” added Tveit. “The ecumenical endeavors cannot be successful without a deep understanding of what it means to live together in the body of Christ, in the love of Christ.”

World Mission Conference plans solidify

The WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) shared with the Executive Committee a report that outlined the theme, sub-themes, style, spiritual life and programme of the World Mission Conference, to be held in Arusha, Tanzania, from 8-13 March 2018.

The theme will be “Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship.”

The phrase “Moving in the Spirit” brings the notion of a pilgrimage characterized by constant hope for a transformed world of justice and peace and a commitment to renewal in Christ, explained Metropolitan Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, moderator of the CWME in the report to the Executive Committee.

“The second part of the theme calls us to transforming discipleship. We are called to be disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, to whom we witness and whom we proclaim as we move in the Spirit.”

The conference will also be a celebration, said Metropolitan Geevarghese Mor Coorilos. “The tone of the conference should be celebratory, for it is a vibrant gathering of God’s people to give thanks and praise for God’s mercy and the continuous use of us for God’s mission.”

Interviews with the WCC representatives may be requested via the WCC director of communication Marianne Ejdersten: mej@wcc-coe.org, +41 79 507 63 63.

WCC Exucutive Committee meeting