

THE GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM

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GCF Committee Meeting

The Committee had its first meeting of the year on February 23 – 25 in Helsinki, Finland, at the invitation of the Finnish Young Women's Christian Association. It was the first meeting of the committee after it was enlarged in the course of 2008 (see below). Major items on the agenda of the Helsinki meeting were the Three – Year Plan of Activities and Budget for the period 2009 – 2011 (see below), and the future of the GCF Secretariat including the search for a new secretary. The implementation of the Three – Year Plan will require a strengthening of the operational capacity of the Secretariat, for which the present administrative budget is not sufficient. The Committee decided to undertake a serious effort of additional fundraising. It reviewed very carefully the process of appointing a new secretary and considered provisions for interim solutions if needed. Among other matters the Committee dealt with were the approval of the 2008 financial reports, the publication of a book on the Limuru Global Forum gathering and detailed planning of the activities that are scheduled for 2009. The latter include a team visit to the Middle East, a regional leadership meeting in Europe and a regional meeting in Africa.

Enlarged GCF Committee

The purpose of enlarging the Committee was to make it more representative of the broad range of churches and organisations that participate in the Forum. The new membership includes representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, the Lutheran World Federation, the Mennonite World Conference, the Organisation of African Instituted Churches, the Pentecostal World Fellowship, the Salvation Army and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Other bodies that are newly represented are the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Asia Evangelical Alliance, through members who were already on the Committee. A new representative of the World Evangelical Alliance has also joined the Committee. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church) and the World Council of Churches will in future each be represented by two persons. In its new composition the Committee reflects one of the features of the Global Christian Forum which is that about 50% of the participants in its gatherings are from Evangelical, Pentecostal and Independent churches and movements. The list of GCF Committee members is posted on the website www.globalchristianforum.org (click on GCF Committee in the menu).

Three – Year Plan

The Three – Year Plan for 2009 – 2011 that was approved by the Committee is based on the proposal that was formulated at the Consultation in New Delhi in November 2008 (re GCF NEWS 9 of December 2008). It reflects the new phase of consolidation and progress which the process of the Global Christian Forum has entered after the Limuru gathering of November 2007 and the evaluations that were carried out in 2008. The Plan responds in particular to two of the key objectives for the coming three years, i.e. *to uphold the distinctive nature of the Forum*, and *to pursue global, regional and national/local levels of activity*. The activities that are listed aim at widening the process to regions where the Forum has not been active until now, e.g. the Caribbean and the Pacific, and strengthening it in other regions where a beginning

has been made such as Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. New types of activities are being introduced, e.g. team visits and national forum meetings. The purpose of team visits is to meet with leaders of churches, organisations and movements in their own setting, to listen and learn from them and to explain the objectives and working methods of the GCF. National forum meetings are intended to encourage and facilitate closer relationships between existing church bodies in the country, e.g. national councils of churches, evangelical alliances, pentecostal fellowships, episcopal conferences etc. Where such spaces for encounter already exist the GCF may benefit from the local experience, in other cases it may contribute to making new things possible. Some sub-regional meetings will be organised in Europe, in follow-up of a recommendation made at the Europe consultation in 2006.

Throughout the Three – Year Plan, the primary purpose of the GCF continues to be the creation of space for new relationships, in particular between and among Christian constituencies that have been little or not in conversation with each other. At the same time, more attention will be given to dealing with specific themes, those that unite as well as those on which opinions differ. In doing so the GCF will try to build on the work that is done and going on in many other inter-Christian dialogues.

The Three – Year Plan will culminate in a second Global Forum gathering scheduled for late 2011. The GCF Committee has begun to reflect on the shape and content of this event, the venue and what it hopes the gathering will achieve.

The Three – Year Plan and Budget can be consulted on www.globalchristianforum.org (click on Documents in the menu).

If you wish to have any more information on these or other aspects of the Global Christian Forum, please visit the website or contact the Secretariat at gcforum@sunrise.ch .

If you receive GCF NEWS twice or more please inform the Secretariat.