



Photo: Nicole Benz

Message from the Coordinator

We wish to convey our gratitude for your long term commitment to the World Council of Churches - Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (WCC-EAA). We are especially happy to report that by Christmas we had received 95% of the financial pledges of participating organizations for 2015. These contributions enable our joint advocacy and our achievements to continue. Highlights from November and December 2015 and updates of 2016 actions are included in the following pages.

The campaign strategy groups and the international reference group met at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva in early November, and with their guidance, the WCC-EAA Secretariat continues its work to strengthen our presence as the leading Christian advocacy voice on HIV and on food security.

The food strategy group identified the following priorities during their strategy group meeting:

- A) Continuing to strengthen capacity of WCC-EAA partner organizations to lobby governments to review implementation of right to food programs, code implementation, especially through developing resources and exchanging information to help participants become change agents

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About

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, an initiative of the World Council of Churches, is a global network of churches and related organizations committed to campaigning together on common concerns for justice and human dignity. Current campaigns focus on HIV and AIDS and food security and sustainable agriculture.



World Council
of Churches

- B) Focusing on food sovereignty and right to food themes: such as grow what you eat, eat what you grow; breastfeeding; climate justice and sustainable, community-driven farming practices (e.g. agro-ecological)
- C) Advocating through working groups in the Civil Society Mechanism of the Committee on Food Security

An advocacy package of one-pagers on a range of themes connecting climate change and agriculture is currently under development, with a special focus on adaptation strategies.

The HIV strategy group established four working groups during their meeting and are working on Access to Treatment, the 2016 UN High Level Meeting, the 2016 International AIDS Conference in Durban, and the elimination of stigma and discrimination.

We look forward to another year of strengthened campaigning against injustice and for the promotion of rights, health and livelihoods of the most vulnerable and marginalized. We wish all our participating organizations, partners, and the communities you serve a prosperous and fulfilling 2016.

— Dr Manoj Kurian

New video presents Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance's call to action

With simple, compelling messages, leaders and friends of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance are featured in a new five-minute video offering an overview of the EAA's work and the serious global need for advocacy related to HIV and AIDS and food security.

The video, available online, is ideal for use by church groups, non-governmental organizations, advocates and many others who wish to learn about the World Council of Church's Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (WCC-EAA) and its campaigns.

Watch and share:

"Campaigning Together – An Introduction to the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWE-GrYtd78>



Members of the Strategy Groups, the International Reference Group and WCC-EAA secretariat during the annual meeting at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva (November 2015). Photo: Alexandra Pomezny/WCC

Live the Promise

HIV Campaign

The Live the Promise Campaign of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance seeks continued priority on the response to HIV and AIDS, the elimination of stigma, and a significant faith-based contribution to the vision of 'getting to zero' – zero new infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths.

“What happens in 2016 will make a significant difference in the struggle to end HIV as a public health threat” recently noted Rev. Michal Schuenemeyer, member of the WCC-EAA HIV Strategic Group.

Indeed a lot still needs to be done to end the AIDS epidemic, but 2016 is a year of great opportunities to work together on HIV and AIDS, seeking to eliminate stigma and discrimination; promoting access to treatment for all and to make a significant contribution to the “vision to getting to zero – zero new infections, zero discrimination, and zero deaths”. Important events are taking place this year on HIV and AIDS, and the WCC-EAA is committed to helping member organizations and partners strengthen their engagement, capacity and collaboration to be more effective in speaking out and acting for justice, peace and human rights in all such events.

United Nations High Level meeting on HIV set for 2016

The United Nations General Assembly will hold a High Level Meeting (HLM) on HIV to take place in New York, 8-10 June 2016. The HLM

“What happens in 2016 will make a significant difference in the struggle to end HIV as a public health threat”

will undertake a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the 2006 and 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. The WCC-EAA has set up an HLM Planning working group to strategize and coordinate the advocacy activities for the High Level Meeting. In addition, HIV Campaign Coordinator Francesca Merico and campaign strategy group member Stuart Kean are members of the Civil Society Advisory Group, which is drafting the Civil Society Outcome Document for the HLM.

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The High Level Meeting will comprise plenary meetings and up to five thematic panel discussions, which will include opportunities for civil society participation. The President of the General Assembly will organize an informal interactive civil society hearing in April (date TBC), with the active participation of people living with HIV and broader civil society, attended by representatives of UN Member and Observer States and observers, NGOs, CSOs and the private sector. WCC-EAA is working to ensure a well-coordinated participation of religious leaders and FBOs to both the Civil Society Hearing and the High Level Meeting in June.

The WCC-EAA working groups are also preparing key messages on stigma and discrimination and access to treatment to influence the text of the Political Declaration.

WCC-EAA is planning an interfaith prayer breakfast at the HLM in June to harness the potential of religious leaders to inspire solidarity with people living with or affected by HIV as well as commitments by governments and local communities to scale-up medical, social, emotional and spiritual support and act to eliminate the root causes of vulnerability to the further spread of HIV.

Patent agreements increase access to medicines

The WCC-EAA has welcomed two recent patent agreements negotiated by the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP). A license agreement between MPP and Bristol-Myers Squibb for daclatasvir was announced before World AIDS Day. Daclatasvir is an important direct acting antiviral that is proven to help cure multiple genotypes of the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Four to five million people are co-infected with HIV and HCV, and the highest morbidity and mortality due to liver scarring is found amongst this group. As this agreement allows the manufacturing of lower-cost generic versions, as well as combinations, improved access to treatment is anticipated. Bristol-Myers Squibb is providing a technology transfer package to support product manufacturing and registration in the 112 countries covered by the licence. Further geographic scope is required, however, to widen the coverage to other HCV infected patients.

A further agreement was announced before Christmas between MPP, the Government of South Africa and Abbvie, a research-based biopharmaceutical company, to work together to overcome supply challenges relating to second-line HIV and AIDS treatments lopinavir and ritonavir (LPV/r) in South Africa. For the first time, Abbvie has entered into an agreement for adult medicines. Before, only Abbvie could supply this crucial medicine, which is one of the most common second-line treatments. Now generic versions can be manufactured and supplied in Africa, although the focus is on South Africa. Combinations with atazanavir (ATV) and darunavir (DRV) as alternative second-line treatments are highlighted for use in South Africa.

The WCC-EAA continues to advocate for better access to second and third line treatments, especially in lower to middle income countries.

Both agreements provide important progress in making essential medicines accessible and affordable for more people, but the WCC-EAA continues to advocate for better access to

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second and third line treatments, especially in lower to middle income countries. The hope is that these agreements will spur other companies to follow suit.

International AIDS Conference planning advances

Planning continues for an interfaith pre-conference (16-17 July 2016) and faith-based spaces and events at the 21st International AIDS Conference (18-22 July) in Durban, South Africa.

Following an open process, 32 nominations were received for the Global Organizing Committee (GOC) and a maximum of 12 will be asked to serve by the WCC-EAA's International Reference Group. The GOC will develop the programme for the interfaith preconference and help plan coordinated faith-based events during the conference, working closely with the Local Host Committee. The website for faith-based events at the conference is under development; updates will be shared via action alerts and on the Live the Promise campaign page at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/ea/live-the-promise-hiv-campaign> and via Facebook.

Nominations were accepted for interfaith chaplains until 31 January 2016. Applicants will be informed by 7 February of WCC-EAA's decision. The International AIDS Conference, held every two years, provides extensive opportunities for sharing and networking across all levels of care and response to the pandemic.

The 21st International AIDS Conference, AIDS 2016, will take place from 18-22 July 2016 in Durban, South Africa. AIDS 2016 is an opportunity to strengthen the engagement of faith communities in the comprehensive response to HIV.

Framework for Dialogue provides platform for action between religious leaders and people living with HIV

On 10 December 2015, WCC-EAA supported a planning meeting for a national Indian dialogue between faith leaders and people living with HIV and key populations, to be held in 2016, based on the Framework of Dialogue. The meeting was organized by WCC-EAA partic-

ipant organization- the National Council of Churches, in association with Ojus Medical Institute (OMI). The planning meeting brought together 19 leaders of various positive people's networks and organizations in India, religious leaders from all major religions in India, INERELA+ Asia Pacific, Asian Interfaith Network on HIV and AIDS- India (AINA), the Art of Living Foundation and UNAIDS.

The Rev. Fr. JP Mokgethi-Heath, one of the founding members of INERELA+, Policy Advisor on HIV and Theology for the Church of Sweden, and a member of the WCC-EAA Strategy Group on HIV, led the process of introduction to the Framework of Dialogue.

As part of the multi country sharing experience, WCC-EAA supported MANET+, NEPWHAN, INERELA+ and CABSAs (representing EAA) at the ICASA Conference in Harare Nov/Dec 2015. Reports from the meeting were submitted by MANET+ and NEPWHAN. The first National Dialogue in Nigeria, expected to take place in December 2015, was postponed to February 2016. Follow up activities are underway in Kenya, Malawi and Ethiopia.

The WCC-EAA participated in a webinar organized by UNAIDS on the Lancet publications related to work of FBOs in addressing HIV and AIDS on 14 December 2015, with a presentation on the Framework for Dialogue Process and on the WCC-EAA Publication – Dignity, Freedom and Grace: Christian Perspectives on HIV, AIDS and Human Rights.

The WCC-EAA led two workshops on the Framework for Dialogue Methodology as potential approach and example of Dialogue between faith and human rights at the Conference on "Finding common ground to dialogue on faith, sexuality and human rights", Utrecht 17-19 January 2016, organized, among others, by ICCO Cooperation -Kerk in Actie and Prisma. Other workshops on the Framework for Dialogue were organized by the WCC-EAA at the AINA interfaith meeting in Chiang Mai on January 15-16, 2016.

For more information on the Framework for Dialogue, see www.frameworkfordialogue.net or email Francesca Merico at fme@wcc-coe.org.

Asian networks strategize on HIV and AIDS

WCC- EAA, the Asian Interfaith Network on HIV (AINA) and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) held an Asian Interfaith Conference on HIV & AIDS, 15-16 January, 2016, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The meeting brought together 30 participants, including people living with HIV, community leaders, representative of international organizations and religious leaders (representing Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam) from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, South Korea and Thailand.

Participants mapped out different HIV and AIDS programs and services that different faith-based organizations are implementing and reviewed methodologies to enhance dialogue and collaboration between faith communities and key populations. They also developed new strategies to scale up cooperation and work over the next two years AINA.

WCC-EAA participating organization CCA will host AINA in the following years, dedicating staff and capacity for the Initiative. On 17-18 January, WCC-EAA Coordinator Dr. Manoj Kurian participated in the CCA Strategy Group that assisted CCA's strategic planning for its work in HIV and AIDS. The four Goals identified for faith communities to strive for were:

- To be inclusive churches and faith communities
- To create an enabling environment in churches and faith communities to face human sexuality
- To assist universal access to comprehensive HIV & AIDS services
- To promote partnership so that 'No One is Left Behind'



World AIDS Day 2015

To mark World AIDS Day, December 1, the WCC-EAA again produced a World AIDS Day service, available on the WCC website. Children from Indonesia were inspired to record the music of the service as their personal contribution to getting to zero, and their recording was used in the World AIDS Day service led by the WCC-EAA at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva.

Photo: Francesca Merico/WCC

Suggested Resources

Dignity, Freedom and Grace: Christian Perspectives on HIV, AIDS and Human Rights (expected February 2016, WCC Publications). Gillian Paterson and Callie Long, eds.

In 2011, the EAA and its global partners initiated an international process of reflection designed to explore faith perspectives on HIV, AIDS and human rights. The present publication is one outcome of this process. Bringing together people living with, working with, researching on, or personally affected by HIV or AIDS, the WCC-EAA invited them to share and record their own thoughts and experiences. These conversations were always lively, sometimes uncomfortable, and often deeply moving. Nevertheless, they provided confirmation of the view that there is indeed a problem. This publication is a response to that problem. Its starting point lies in the realities of the lived experience of people who are, themselves, subject to the human rights abuses we are seeking to address. It has brought together a team of writers, all working in the field of HIV and AIDS, most of them Christian, in the hope that their stories will be a resource and a source of encouragement to organizations, groups and individuals working in both fields. The publication was made possible with support from UNAIDS and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) through the "EAA, World YWCA and WCC-EHAIA Consortium".

UNAIDS HIV Strategy adopted in December 2015

The UNAIDS 2016-2021 Strategy is a bold call to action to get on the Fast-Track and reach people being left behind. It is an urgent call to front-load investments. It is a call to reach the 90–90–90 treatment targets, to close the testing gap and to protect the health of the 22 million people living with HIV who are still not accessing treatment. It is a call to redress the deplorably low treatment coverage for children living with HIV. http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/20151027_UNAIDS_PCB37_15_18_EN_rev1.pdf

For more information on the Live the Promise Campaign:

Email: Francesca Merico, HIV Campaign Coordinator, fme@wcc-coe.org

Web: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/ea/live-the-promise-hiv-campaign>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Livethepromise/>

Twitter: @e_alliance



For your 2016 calendar

March:

Launch of the WCC-EAA Publication Dignity, Freedom and Grace: Christian Perspectives on HIV, AIDS and Human Rights – side event at the Human Rights Council in Geneva

23-25 March:

Eastern Europe and Central Asia AIDS Conference , Moscow, Russia

April:

Civil Society Hearing, United Nations High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, New York City, USA

19-21 April:

United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem, New York City, USA

8-10 June:

United Nations High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, New York City, USA

16-17 July:

AIDS 2016 Interfaith Pre-conference, Durban, South Africa

18-22 July:

AIDS 2016 – 21st International AIDS Conference, Durban, South Africa

Food for Life

Food for Life Campaign

The Food for Life Campaign of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance aims to eradicate hunger, promote adequate nutrition, and strive towards just and sustainable food systems. The Campaign places particular emphasis on sustainable agricultural practices and the situation of smallholder producers and their access to and control over natural resources such as land, water and seeds.

COP21: Achieving zero hunger in the midst of a changing climate

WCC-EAA and several participating organizations were represented in Paris in December 21 at COP21, the United Nations negotiations on climate change. WCC-EAA was part of the larger ecumenical group attending the conference and demanding strong, comprehensive

action and commitment by governments. We continue to call for more investment in the development of adaptation strategies that prioritize a zero hunger future, as the resulting benefits will be cross-cutting to a number of Sustainable Development Goals.

A press release was issued detailing the concern that food security was not given more prominence in the Paris Agreement: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/cop21-how-climate-change-affects-access-to-our-daily-bread>

We urge organizations and groups to consider signing the Paris Pledge for Action in solidarity with other non-state actors for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. More information can be found here: <http://www.parispledgeforaction.org/>



Photo: Jonathan Sta. Rosa/NCCP

Philippines consultation addresses food and climate change

On 11 December, a consultation on the right to food and the impact of climate change in the Philippines was co-hosted by the WCC-EAA and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

Focusing on the development of a call to action, the attendees addressed the urgent need for transformation of economic policies, institutions and structures at three levels: the international community (with reference to decision makers at COP21), the Philippine government, and churches and faith communities.

The call is for awareness of and advocacy against the current orthodox economic policies that fuel climate change, for a theology that embraces the natural world instead of exploiting it, and education about climate change via church channels. Better support from churches in times of natural disasters is also called for, given that the Philippine islands are among the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Climate change poses serious threats to food security demands and so churches must be equipped to assist communities. Going beyond providing sanctuaries, church people should be trained as “first responders” in times of crisis.

Read more about the consultation and find the full text of the call to action at: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/consultation-considers-right-to-food-in-context-of-climate-change>

Plans are developing for more regional consultations of a similar nature for 2016.

World Economic Forum: WCC General Secretary sets out “Ten Commandments” on food

A 21 January World Economic Forum session on how food choices can become a catalyst for positive change became an opportunity for World Council of Churches General Secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit to present “Ten Commandments” of food to the gathered business and political leaders.

“If we view food through the lens of justice, every plate of food reminds us of certain challenges and opportunities. It is important that

we acknowledge the efforts, investments and very lives of living plants and creatures sacrificed to provide food on our tables,” reflected Tveit after the event.

Tveit’s ten commandments of food:

1. You shall give thanks for the food you eat.
2. You shall provide food for those who have no food.
3. You shall eat mindfully and in moderation.
4. You shall be grateful to those who grow and prepare food for your table.
5. You shall not waste food.
6. You shall reduce the ecological footprint of food production and supply.
7. You shall protect the biodiversity of the sources of food.
8. You shall support fair wages for farmers’ efforts.
9. You shall strive for all people to have access to affordable and nutritious food.
10. You shall rejoice and share the sacred gift of food with all.

Tveit added: “Food is sacred, as it is a gift of God to sustain our lives through sharing, celebration, gratitude, sacrifice and renewal. In our common home — the Earth — we have to work together to limit climate change and other barriers to food security, so that food can be made available to all today and in the years to come.

Food is essential for life, he pointed out. Almost one out of every nine people in the world

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are chronically undernourished, while about one out of every 12 suffers the ill health consequences of obesity.

We welcome reflections on these “Ten Commandments” and look forward to opportunities for wider outreach of the Food for Life Campaign through the General Secretary’s advocacy at Davos.

Land grabbing highlighted by Brot für Alle

Land grabbing and its impacts on agriculture were the key themes of a seminar held in Bern on 14 January 2016. Co-hosted by WCC-EAA participating organization Brot für Alle and the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Bern, the seminar brought together academics, private sector investors, government donors, civil society organizations and grassroots activists.

Land grabbing, or more neutrally land acquisition, is the process whereby governments, corporations or other actors acquire land for private land use purposes. Examples include rich countries purchasing land in developing nations to secure domestic food security and corporations using former publicly owned land for commercial purposes that do not benefit local communities. Land grabbing is, simply, the surrender of power over land for capital accumulation.

In opening the event, Markus Giger of the CDE noted that land grabbing is not a new phenomenon, going back to Biblical times. Since the global financial collapse of 2007 and the food crisis following in 2008, there has been a so-called new rush for land. Investment in land has a complex web of stakeholders, which the CDE has started to map in the Land Matrix Global Observatory: www.landmatrix.org.

Also on the agenda during the seminar were the global guidelines on land tenure. During that panel discussion, the importance of civil society organizations in using and monitoring the voluntary guidelines, as well as holding governments and private sector accountable, was debated. Nyikew Ochala, an Ethiopian activist, gave concrete examples of how regimes can violate human rights and control land in unjust ways.

The second panel focused on investment: what are the trends, who uses land, and who controls land were some of the questions asked by the moderator. The CDE director, Peter Messerli, commented that responsible investment is not about bringing harmony to land use change, as that process always includes conflict. Given the complexity of interactions between actors, the demand is for a system of checks and balances.

Peasants are the responsible investors in land, as they love Earth, water, soil and life

Perhaps the highlight of the event was the impassioned speech made by Chantal Jacovetti, a representative of Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes (CNOP) Mali and La Via Campesina, with the simple message that peasants are the responsible investors in land, as they love Earth, water, soil and life. The final panel gave opportunity for more Global South activists to share their local realities of land grabbing and small scale farming: stories from Indonesia, Benin and Togo.

As summarized by the final speaker, Elisabeth Bürgi, Brot für Alle board member and CDE senior research scientist, land use change happens. The important questions lie in participation: who participates, and how can we create an environment that enables participation? Who holds that responsibility in interlinked systems?

Suggested Resources

Video resources:

In Defense of Food –
a documentary by Michael Pollan
<http://www.pbs.org/video/2365635287/>

The final documentary in a series of
seed sovereignty documentaries
produced by the Gaia Foundation
<http://www.seedsoffreedom.info/seeds-of-justice/>

Reading list:

Women in agriculture

http://www.farmingfirst.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Farming-First-Female-Face-of-Farming_Brochure.pdf

https://www.tni.org/files/download/women_agricultural_workers.pdf

Right to Food

http://www.fian.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Right_to_Food_Journal_2015.pdf

Climate change and agroecology

http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/future_tense/2012/04/agro_ecology_lessons_from_cuba_on_agriculture_food_and_climate_change_.html

International Year of Pulses

<http://www.fao.org/pulses-2016/news/news-detail/en/c/345401/>

Women and Agriculture

“Those who hold seeds” a Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace blog on Women and Agriculture, by Anna-Marie Müller: <http://blog.oikoumene.org/posts/those-who-hold-seeds>

For more information on the Food for Life Campaign:

Email: Dr. Manoj Kurian, WCC-EAA Coordinator mku@wcc-coe.org

Web: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/eaa/food-for-life-campaign>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/foodforlifecampaign/>

Twitter: @e_alliance



For your 2016 calendar

15-16 February:

6th Global Meeting of the Farmer's Forum, Rome, Italy

17-18 February:

39th Session of IFAD's Governing Body, Rome, Italy

18- 22 March:

Global Network of Right to Food and Nutrition, Dakar, Senegal

April (date to be confirmed):

Regional Meeting on Right to food and Food Security in the context of El Niño and the meeting of the EAA Strategy Group on Food for Life, Johannesburg, South Africa

24 -26th April:

Pre-Assembly Food, Water, Land and Life Giving Agriculture, National Council of Church in India (NCCI) 28th General Assembly, Jabalpur, India

May (date to be confirmed):

Seminar on Convergence of Climate Change, Food, Land and Water Rights, in Bethlehem, in conjunction with the WCC Working Group on Climate Change

June (date to be confirmed):

Regional training of church diaconal workers—with a focus on services for people living with Disability on Social Protection, the right to food and Urban & Peri-Urban Agriculture, involving Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland, WCC- EAA & Mazingira Institute, Kampala, Uganda

September (date to be confirmed):

Consultation on Land and Food Security, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1-6 October: Latin American Ecumenical Youth formation, including a day dedicated to the Right to Food, Bogota, Colombia

1-6 October:

Latin American Ecumenical Youth formation, including a day dedicated to the Right to Food, Bogota, Colombia

9-16 October:

Churches' Food Week of Action

17-20 October:

43rd Meeting of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome, Italy
