

Foreword

We are pleased to present the program quarterly report of Christian Conference of Asia from January-March 2008. We are presenting this report to update you on the implemented programs. The report highlights ecumenical involvement in the struggles of Asian churches and people.

We will be happy to receive your feedback and comments, on how we can build our strengths and be more visible in response to the emerging contexts and realities of Asia. We are really grateful for your concern and support, which is a source of strength for our member churches and the ecumenical movement.

The CCA staff joins me to thank you sincerely for your involvement and support in CCA's life and work. We earnestly hope for a continued partnership with you in this developing mission.

Prawate Khid-arn
General Secretary

General Secretariat

1. Extraordinary Executive Committee meeting (18-19 March 2008, Chiang Mai)

The CCA Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee was held at the Crystal Spring House in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The meeting was a follow up to the decision made in the last Executive Committee meeting in Bangkok in November 2007, to deal with the issue of CCA legal status and building construction in Chiang Mai.

Regarding the legal status of CCA, the committee affirmed that:

- a. CCA will continue its registration as “CCA Foundation” in Thailand with international objectives and participation.
- b. Executive staff will represent CCA as members of Foundation’s Board of Directors; as according to the Thai law foreigners can become member of the Foundation Board if they reside in the country.

Regarding the construction of CCA building, committee proposed that after discussion the final decision should be taken by CCA General Committee, which will meet in September 2008. The committee also discussed how CCA can be more visible in the life and mission of member churches. It was strongly recommended that CCA must be more proactive in response to the emerging issues in Asia.

Other matters included:

- CCA Evaluation: Four names for the CCA Evaluation team members were approved by the committee, including Mr. Leo Bashyam, Rev. Dr Henriette T. Hutabarat Lebang, Mr. Charlie Ocampo and Rev. Dr Hermen Shastri. The evaluation will commence from June 2008 and the report will be presented to the CCA General Assembly in 2010.
- CCA General Assembly: The Executive Committee approved the following:
 - a. Theme: “Called to Prophesy, Reconcile and Heal”
 - b. Date: 14-21 April 2010
 - c. Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Ecumenical Relations

10 January: The General Secretary had a meeting with nine representatives of Church World Service (CWS) led by their director, Dr. John Maclough. The meeting was held at the CWS office in Bangkok. The discussions were significant in terms of program content and relations with partners in the region. Sharing updates from CCA was on the agenda during the meeting. It was discussed with CWS, as how mutual efforts can be strengthened to develop better understanding on the emerging issues of Asia, such as political situations in Pakistan, Myanmar and Thailand. The CWS' regional office in Laos was also visited. Dr. John Maclough affirmed the support of CWS for CCA and its member churches.

11 January: The General Secretary with other staff visited three Consul Generals in Chiang Mai including Japan (Mrs. Junko Yokota), U.S.A. (Mr. Michael K. Morrow) and India (Mr. Arvind Kumar) to extend New Year greetings. A courtesy visit to the Consul General of China, Mrs. Wu Huiqing was also made on 28 December 2007.

The visit was an opportunity for CCA to share common concerns and updates on programs with the Consul Generals. The General Secretary with Mrs. Junko Yokota shared his concerns about churches and ecumenism in Asia. Mrs. Junko Yokota also shared her observation about the “increase of churches in Korea” in comparison to other Asian countries. Mr. Arvind Kumar shared about the situation of religious freedom in India. He talked about churches' concern over the issue and hoped the conflict can be resolved in a peaceful way.

15-17 January: The General Secretary participated in the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) conference on “Children and HIV/AIDS” from 15-17 January in Bangkok. Around sixty people representing faith communities from Asia and Pacific participated in the event. The conference aimed to strengthen the role of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in “Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS” campaign and framework for support to the children living with HIV and AIDS.

The General Secretary was invited as one of the speakers to share about CCA's involvement with HIV/AIDS issue and its role in interfaith cooperation. In this context the question was raised by CCA as how life skills education can be provided to the HIV positive children from faith based platforms.

Experiences from churches and ecumenical bodies working for HIV/AIDS issue were significant in the conference, and valued by the participants. Churches from Papua, Thailand, India, the Philippines and South Africa were represented. Asian Interfaith Network on HIV/AIDS (AINA) was also well received and recognised.

CCA together with AINA and Christ Church in Thailand (CCT)–AIDS Ministry is planning to hold a Pre-Conference on “Reclaiming Rights of the Children Living with HIV/AIDS” in July this year. The outcomes, experiences, voices and practical

recommendations from this event will be presented in the 17th International AIDS Conference to be held later this year in Mexico.

18-19 January: The General Secretary, as Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF) Executive Committee member attended their meeting held at the American Club in Hanoi, Vietnam.

29-30 January: The CCA Round Table Core Group meeting was held at the WCC office in Geneva, Switzerland. The members including Dr Mathews George Chunakara, Dr Barbara Ramsperger, Rev. Dr James Vijayakumar, Mr Johan Hesselgren, Rev. Dr Rienzie Perera and the General Secretary were present.

It was discussed how CCA's cooperation with its ecumenical partners be further strengthened. It was agreed that the next CCA Round Table meeting will be held in February 2009 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The General Secretary met with WCC program staff including Rev. Dr. Dietrich Werner for finalising Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on WCC-CCA joint program with ETE (Ecumenical Theological Education). CCA team also met with Rev. Hubert Van Beek (Global Christian Forum), Ms. Linda Hartke (Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and HIV/AIDS concern), Dr. Rogate Mshana (Poverty, Wealth and Ecology Consultation) and Mr. Immanuel Quintaro (Frontier Internship in Mission).

24-25 February: The General Secretary welcomed participants of International Ecumenical Conference on Arms Trade. The program was held jointly by CCA-JID and the Gothenburg Process in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The conference raised the understanding and knowledge among the participants on the ethical challenges posed by the issue. During the conference, participants had the opportunity to deliberate on arms trade issue from diverse perspectives. The presentations made by the resource persons were enlightening and initiated in-depth discussions (*details under the CCA-JID report*).

26-29 February: As member of Social and Economic Development (SED) of Church World Service (CWS), the General Secretary attended the first Quadrennial Committee meeting in New York.

The General Secretary visited various partner organisations in New York, including World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), WCC- Churches Commission on International Affairs, General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), General Board of Church and Society (GBSC), and the National Council of Churches in USA (NCC-USA)

12-13 March: The General Secretary attended the General Committee meeting of Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) held at Payap University in Chiang Mai. CCA

was officially introduced to the local church leaders and ways of furthering mutual cooperation and networking were discussed.

26-29 March: The 3rd General Assembly of the Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC) was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia to formulate programs, envisage future visions and elect new leaders.

Other than CCA, representative from ecumenical organisations including WCC, Lutheran World Federation (LWR-Cambodia office), Church World Service (Cambodia office) and International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) were present. The General Secretary delivered a message on the Assembly theme “Christian Unity and Witness in a Pluralistic Cambodia” at the opening worship.

KCC was established in Cambodia in 1998 and became a full member of CCA in 2000. Since then seventy-eight churches have become KCC members and its General Assembly is held once in five years.

30 March: The General Secretary visited churches in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, along with Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, secretary for WCC-Human Rights and Asia Relations, Rev. Huh Chung Jung and Ms. Janejinda Pawadee from Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program (MEPP) in CCA.

The possibility of ECV becoming a full member of CCA and WCC was discussed. Even if not in the capacity of member church, ECV expressed its wish to participate in CCA General Assembly in 2010 as an observer.

The cooperation between ECV, CCA and WCC was initiated in 1960s and the relationships got strengthened after the Vietnam War. Now the ECV has a status of registered official organisation and the number of its member churches have increased in the past few years.

Faith, Mission and Unity (FMU)

Quarterly Report for January-March 2008

CCA-FMU staff: Hope S. Antone and Park Sungkook

Inter-cluster Program

Indigenous Women's Alternative Leadership for Transformation (IWALT)

(4-8 February in Chiang Doi, Thailand)

Hope S. Antone served as resource person on Asian feminist theologising at the CCA-EGY organised program for Indigenous and Dalit women in Asia. This was the regional culmination activity after a series of sub-regional activities and follow-up activities at the national and local levels by participants in the sub-regional programs. Hope Antone had served as resource person on Asian feminist theologising in all the sub-regional IWALT workshops. See *CCA News* (March 2008, pp. 6-8) for more on this program.

FMU Major Programs

The Faith, Mission and Unity program area team is grateful for the kind support from ICCO/Kerkinactie which enabled us to hold two national theological workshops in Sri Lanka and Indonesia and two sub-regional consultation-dialogues on "holistic mission in the context of Asian plurality" in Philippines and India during the first quarter of this year.

(1) National Theological Workshop on "naming, unmasking and engaging with principalities and powers"

(7-8 February in Kandy, Sri Lanka)

CCA-FMU co-organised with the General Secretariat this national theological workshop in Sri Lanka. Around fifty people gathered at Hotel Thilanka for this two-day workshop. The intention to bring together people from diverse backgrounds of a national context, including theologians and representatives of other religions as well as from various secular/religious organisations and institutions, was more than well met. The participants who came not only from different religious backgrounds, but also from different 'levels' of society, mirrored the emergency and affectedness of the situation of violence that people in Sri Lanka are facing. Participants coming from the grassroots - from plantations in North-East regions as well as from south of Sri Lanka - shared their experiences and reported about the situation of violence. They were sharing experiences of disappearance, abduction, abuse and rape. Reports on situation of "military occupation" in the North and North-Eastern part of Sri Lanka, where the Tamils are settled, were shared. With these reports the workshop was gifted with concrete samples and experience from reality, as material for critical theological reflections. The workshop provided participants with several steps of thinking and reflecting on the problem. Concrete experiences of suffering and discrimination, followed by critical social analysis brought concrete life stories to a level of disimpassioned reflection. Theological-ethical reflection helped and encouraged engaging the whole matter with religious values. Along with contributions from Christian

side, reflections also came from Muslims and Buddhists. These strengthened the feeling and confidence of solidarity among religions, still not hesitating in self-reflection.

The resource persons were: Rev. W. P. Ebenezer Joseph (President Methodist Church), Mr. Raja Dharmapala (Buddhist lay scholar), Dr. Ajith Rupasinghe (Director of Savitri), Dr. M.P. Joseph (Tainan Theological College, Taiwan), Dr. Shirley Wijesinghe (Senior Lecturer at Kelania University), Ven. Pandit Madampagama Assaji (Chief Sunga Nayaka, Colombo Koralaya), Rev. Fr. Reid Shelton Fernando (Convenor, People Against Torture; Priest Colombo Diocese), Maulavi Madhani (Muslim scholar), Rev. Dr. Sungkook PARK (CCA-FMU).

(2) National Theological Workshop on “Doing Theology in the Context of Religious Resurgence Today”

(March 10-12 in Jakarta, Indonesia)

CCA-FMU co-organised this National Theological Workshop with CCI (Communion of Churches in Indonesia), which was attended by 26 participants representing the member churches of CCI, theological institutes and church organisations. The concept and purpose of this workshop was to clarify, criticise and reconstruct theological identity and to reflect Christian practice in the midst of an ongoing process of secularisation and globalisation. In spite of the process of increasing secularisation the participants and organising bodies recognised ‘Religious Resurgence’ as an emerging issue in the Indonesian context. Therefore the workshop was to promote critical and creative theological work and new ways of theologising, while bearing in mind the specific situation Indonesian churches are facing.

Discussions related to the theme and also efforts to establish an ‘Indonesian way of Doing Theology’ (e.g. *Minjung Theology, Korea*) were the main issues that were given high attention. Due to the specific situation Indonesian churches are facing, two scholars cum activists from Islam were also invited to share their experiences and points of view of “Religious Resurgence Today”. Gender and generation balance was carefully considered in organising this workshop.

The resource persons were Mr. Stephen Suleeman (Lecturer, Jakarta Theological Seminary), Prof. Dr. Franz Magnis Suseno (Driyakarta School of Philosophy, Jakarta/Indonesia, Political Philosophy), Mr. Ihsan Ali Fauzi (Writer and Expert on Islam), Rev. Junifrius Gultom (Indonesia Pentecostal Churches Fellowship), Rev. Dr. Marthin Sinaga (Jakarta Theological Seminary), Rev. Dr. Zakaria Ngelow (Rantepao Theological Seminary), Rev. Dr. Anwar Tjen (Indonesia Bible Society).

(3) Southeast Asian sub-regional consultation-dialogue on “Holistic Mission in the Context of Asian Plurality”

(Manila, Philippines on March 24-29)

CCA-FMU organized this sub-regional consultation-dialogue, which was attended by 34 representatives from countries in Southeast Asia. It was hosted by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), both members of CCA. Objectives of the consultation were: (i) To review, assess and critique the impact of traditional and narrow mission orientation and practice in Asia; (ii) To confess our participation in such traditional and narrow mission orientation and practice; (iii) To equip ourselves, our member churches and their related agencies (e.g. Bible schools and seminaries) with holistic mission understanding and practice in view of the context of Asian plurality; and (iv) To share and publish stories and experiences of alternative forms of mission that are more holistic but less known in Asia.

Participants included staff of mission and ecumenism of the national councils or national churches, professors of mission from church-related theological institutions and representatives of mission-sending churches in Korea and Taiwan attended this consultation-dialogue held at Shalom UCCP Centre in Manila. Countries represented were Indonesia, East Timor, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, and Philippines (Cambodia could not be present because of their General Assembly at that time). Of the total of 34 participants, 11 were women and three younger people.

Resource persons were: Rev. Fr. Rex Resurrection Reyes (General Secretary of NCC Philippines) who gave the keynote speech; Rev. Dr. Robinson Radjagukguk (visiting professor in the Philippines from Indonesia through UEM) who gave the biblico-theological foundations of mission from Asian eyes; Rev. Dr. Cung Lian Hup (professor at Myanmar Institute of Theology) who gave an input on “holistic mission in the context of poverty and injustice in Asia”; Rev. Dr. Erick Barus (staff of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia) who gave an input on “holistic mission in the context of Asian plurality”. Bishop Emeritus Erme Camba of the UCCP (former president of CCA and now teaching mission at Silliman University Divinity School) served as critical listener at the consultation. A panel of representatives from mission-sending churches consisted of Rev. Shin Seung Min (staff for ecumenism of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea), Rev. Kim Kyung In (staff for ecumenism and policy of the Presbyterian Church in Korea), and Rev. Dr. Chuang Hsiao-Shen (pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and professor at Tainan Theological College and Seminary in Taiwan). Sharing some alternative ways of doing mission were: Rev. Son Sung Kyu (from PCK doing natural farming among the poor, including Muslims, in Davao, Philippines) and Rev. Kim Hyun Sook (from PROK, doing accompanying work in Iloilo and Bukidnon). The group visited a number of depressed communities in Manila: a Muslim migrant community, a slum/squatter community, a fishing community, and a garbage community.

Based on the written evaluation, participants generally found the consultation helpful and meaningful. The time and space together was one of open and honest sharing (a trusted space). The visit to the depressed communities touched many participants – someone said experiential learning is more powerful than classroom discussion. The visit evoked many feelings, including a questioning of ‘where is God’ in such inhuman situations. It challenged some to concretise their theology of incarnation and encouraged others to

strengthen their mission in holistic aspects. The sharing of mission journeys, panel sharing and Bible study were specially cited as most helpful and meaningful. However, the lack of evangelical presence in the consultation was noted (FMU staff did try to invite two Korean missionaries in the Philippines from the Assembly of God and while they had sent in their confirmation already, they finally pulled out due to some emergency at their mission field). A number of participants mentioned how the consultation encouraged them to continue to provide re-orientation to their local churches which tend to focus only on evangelism work; and to continue interfaith dialogue at the grassroots level. An indigenous priest from Malaysia said he now wishes to learn more about contextualisation of mission. The group requested that Bible study materials and stories on holistic mission be produced by CCA to help guide the local churches in re-orienting members towards more holistic mission.

(4) South Asian sub-regional consultation-dialogue on “Holistic Mission in the Context of Asian Plurality”

(Bangalore, India on March 29-April 2)

This sub-regional consultation-dialogue was held at United Theological College, in Bangalore. A total of 34 participants attended this consultation to discuss and reflect mission in South Asia. Invited participants came from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and South Korea.

This consultation purposed to reflect theologically on mission, starting with a critical presentation on Mt. 28, the so-called ‘Great Commission’ delivered by Dr. K.C. Abraham. Dr. Hgranthan Chhungi’s presentation focused on the perspective from the marginalised, where she also emphasised feminist issues related to mission. Before going to think about “Holistic Mission”, the theme itself, it was important to get insights on *Mission Dei* and its legacies, from the perspectives of the marginalised.

Rev. Dr. Christpher Duraisingh delivered a presentation on “Rethinking Perspectives”, which helped the participants to review and reflect the diversity and depth of mission paradigms. Report and sharing on receiving and sending missionaries, thoughts on mission from the countries were done by the representatives of each NCC and other mission organisations represented. Group discussions followed each presentation. The reports and sharing facilitated the group discussion and opened new ways of understanding paradigms on mission from the practical perspective.

Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera (Associate General Secretary, CCA) delivered a presentation on “Christian Identity in the Context of Asian Plurality”. This presentation was intent to be a key to rethink and reflect the very basic essential elements of Christian identity and it gave more than the needed impact on further discussions.

Beside the consultation itself, the venue (United Theological College, Bangalore / India) opened the way for CCA to be visible at a theological educational institution. Representative of CCA-FMU (Rev. Dr. Sungkook PARK) was invited to give a greeting at the valedictory act at UTC. The Faculty of UTC and CCA hosted a reception in turn to

strengthen and deepen relationship with each other. The CCA hosted reception, which was kindly organised by NCC-India (Bishop D.K. Sahu) helped to facilitate and advertise CCA and its upcoming programs to the local churches and church leaders in India and to hear also their voices and needs. All participants of the consultation were also invited to local worship services.

The resource persons were: Rev. Dr. K.C. Abraham, Dr. Hgrangthan Chhungi (Indian School of Ecumenical Theology), Rev. Dr. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar (United Theological College), Rev. Dr. Christopher Duraisingh (Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge/USA), and Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera (Christian Conference of Asia).

Networking

CCA-FMU hosted meetings of the Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology on 18-21 February at the McGilvary College of Divinity, Chiang Mai, Thailand along with the Rev. Dr. Chuleepran Srisoontorn, academic dean of McGilvary College of Divinity and a member of CCA-FMU program area committee. The meetings were aimed to assess the modules project on Asian feminist theologising, of which Hope Antone has been a part. This project has produced two module booklets: (a) an introduction to Asian feminist theologising and (b) an introduction to an Asian feminist re-reading of history. Two other modules are still in process: (c) on Asian women and religions; and (d) an Asian feminist view of leadership. Another part of the meeting was to plan for the workshop on leadership since the writing of the module usually follows a workshop where resource persons and participants struggle with identified issues and texts.

A one-day seminar with Thai women was held on 19 February, starting with a feminist worship at the chapel – including a dramatic rendition of the Biblical text on “who will roll the stone away” (Mark 16:1-4), a short reflection by Hope Antone and a dance in celebration and commitment by everyone. After the worship, the main input was made by Dr. Hisako Kinukawa, a feminist theologian from Japan, who gave a comprehensive Bible study on leadership using the Biblical stories of Miriam, Aaron and Moses.

The afternoon was spent with a smaller group of Thai women, sharing stories and experiences of women's struggles in Thailand.

Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service

Quarterly Report for January-March 2008

CCA-JID staff: Tony Waworuntu and Freddy De Alwis

1. Ecumenical Consortium for Peace Building and Social Development on the Korean Peninsula: (7 – 8 February 2008, Arnoldshain Academy in Frankfurt)

Ecumenical Forum for “Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula” held its 2nd meeting in Frankfurt, Germany. The event was attended by thirty-five participants representing churches and ecumenical organisations including National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK), Korean Christian Federation (KCF), World Council of Churches (WCC) and CCA.

The meeting aimed to form a worldwide network for peace, reunification and development cooperation on the Korean peninsula through participation from KCF and WCC, which could not take part in first meeting of the process in Hong Kong. Fourteen Korean representatives from seven member churches of NCCCK participated in the Forum.

The meeting title was changed to “Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on the Korean peninsula”. It was to emphasise the importance of worldwide network for development cooperation in the North as one column. This also included promotion of churches’ efforts at the global level for peace and unification in the Korean peninsula in solidarity with WCC, CCA and other ecumenical organisations in spirit of Tozanso process. The term ‘forum’ instead of ‘consortium’ was used to stress inclusiveness of participation from ecumenical institutions.

In the Hong Kong meeting, it was discussed how common understanding on the issue of poverty in North Korea could not be resolved by emergency humanitarian support since 1995. This also includes support to North Korea in the past ten years, which has been constituted by the lack of information sharing, mutual cooperation and process of common evaluation, which eventually resulted in the loss of trust, wasteful duplication and money-centred support. Therefore the Forum took its first step to share information and experiences in relation to North Korea and plan effective projects on long term basis in mutual trust through world-wide ecumenical network.

As result of discussions, the newly created Steering Group will take the responsibility of coordinating the programmatic tasks for common projects. The Steering Group consists of eight representatives from National Council of Churches in Japan (NCCJ), United Church of Canada, Methodist Church in Britain, Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED)–Church Development Service, NCCCK, KCF, WCC and CCA.

In its final statement the Ecumenical Forum appealed, “Christians around the world should be in wholehearted solidarity with the efforts of the Korean nation towards achieving reunification, based on the principles of peaceful co-existence, prosperity and common interests” and be fully involved in the development cooperation.

Before the Forum, a seminar on “Peace, Unification and Social Development on the Korean Peninsula” took place on 5-7 February organised by German churches. It was an opportunity for the Forum members to be part of the event, where around hundred church representatives participated and highlighted churches’ role in peace and reunification of Korean peninsula.

2. Northeast Asia Working Group Meeting on “Peace and People’s Security” (18–19 February 2008, Chiang Mai, Thailand)

JID hosted Northeast Asia Working Group Meeting on “Peace and People’s Security” on 18 February in Chiang Mai. The first day started with Biblical reflections from Rev. Dr Park Sungkook in the opening worship. This was followed by CCA General Secretary Dr Prawate Khid-arn’s opening message, where he proposed to revise the Terms of Reference with regard to names and membership of the Working Group.

JID-Joint Executive Secretary, Tony Waworuntu introduced the participants and Rev. Toshi Yamamoto shared updates from International Conference on ‘Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution’ organised by National Council of Churches in Japan (NCCJ) from 28 November–2 December 2007 in Tokyo. The conference was attended by 200 religious leaders from around the world including Buddhists, Christians, Muslims and Hindus. NCCJ with other religious groups in Japan is planning to organise a follow-up meeting in May 2008. Rev. Yamamoto shared the conference statement with the Working Group members and highlighted the action plans proposed by the participants, stating:

- “Establish Article 9 as a patrimony for the whole human race and formulate a global Article 9 Network.
- Encourage a clause in favour of demilitarisation and renunciation of war to be included in the constitution of every nation.
- Chart a new path for human history, using every opportunity to publicly call for abolishment of all wars.
- Invite communities to pray and act for peace and non-violence and designate a special peace day in Asia.
- Stand up for religion whenever it is abused to perpetrate violence and repent for any complicity.
- Share information about violations of human rights in the world, organise protest actions combined with prayer to promote democracy.
- Ask the Japanese government to keep Article 9 and make it a living reality”.

Kwon Oh-Sung reported about the 2nd meeting of Ecumenical Forum on Korean Peninsula. The meeting had more participants as compared to the first meeting held in

Hong Kong in 2006. Participation from KCF and WCC was significant this time considering they were not able to join the first meeting in Hong Kong. One of the important decisions taken in the Ecumenical Forum was the revision of Terms of Reference, including the name and structure. Kwon Oh-Sung shared that the participants in the Ecumenical Forum had consensus on replacing the term 'consortium' with 'forum'. Kwon Oh-Sung, Tony Waworuntu and members of the Ecumenical Forum Steering Committee were requested by the Working Group members to be updated on new developments, so that overlapping of programs and projects can be avoided.

The Working Group members took the proposal in consideration provided by CCA General Secretary, Prawate Khid-arn regarding the revision of Terms of Reference, name and membership of the Working Group. They reached a common understanding that the current name of the Working Group has a strong functional connotation and does not explicitly express the representation of the churches from North-East Asia.

It was agreed that the new name of the Working Group will be "Churches' Forum on Peace and People's Security in North-East Asia". The Churches' Forum will continue to fulfil the mandate of the original Working Group, and the current membership of the original Working Group will remain unchanged. Churches' Forum will invite all member churches of the CCA in North-East Asia region to join which will include appointment of one representative from each church.

3. Ecumenical Conference on "Arms Trade in Asia"

(24 – 26 February 2008, Chiang Mai Thailand)

Fifteen participants from India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sweden and the Philippines got together at the Crystal Spring House in Chiang Mai, Thailand for International Ecumenical Conference on "Arms Trade in Asia". The conference was jointly organised by JID and the Gothenburg Process in context of prophetic roles required by churches in addressing the issue of arms trade in Asia. Representatives from different faith participated in the conference in context of interreligious cooperation and networking needed to address the complex issue of arms trade.

Participants discussed how production and trading of military equipment is a profound concern for the churches. In background of this concern, the ecumenical initiative of the Gothenburg process was taken to bring churches and church-related organisations together to address the issue of arms trade. Within the Gothenburg process, churches and ecumenical organisations worked to raise awareness on the ethical challenges posed by the arms trade. The process encouraged inclusive and constructive dialogue with the defence industry, control authorities and armed forces.

It was discussed how global trade and transfer of arms is fuelling conflicts and creating a violent culture against the teachings of Christ. Therefore the need for churches to respond to these realities from a theological and ethical imperative was stressed. The group renewed its commitment to the peace issue, and stressed the need to focus on initiating

processes to minimise the use of violence and recognising our common vulnerability as human beings. These are some excerpts from the discussion:

“We affirm that the kind of peace for which churches pray cannot be achieved by militarization and militarism, of which the production and trade of arms is an important prerequisite. The excessive proliferation of arms puts people at risk by increasing insecurity, vulnerability and fear. The setting up of ethical criteria around the arms trade worldwide and to look at the consequences is therefore of great importance.”

During the conference, participants had the opportunity to deliberate on the issue of arms trade from diverse perspectives. The presentations made by the resource persons were influential and were followed by in-depth discussions. At the end of the conference, participants came out with a statement and recommendations.

4. Visit to SIDR Cyclone victims in Bangladesh (29 February - 1 March 2008)

Joint Executive Secretary for CCA-JID Freddy De Alwis had a pastoral visit to the victims of SIDR Cyclone in Bangladesh. SIDR hit the country on 15 November 2007 due to which more than 3199 people died and the economic loss was estimated around three billion dollars.

It was observed that one of the badly cyclone stricken areas, Bagerhat District in Khulna Division comprise of four million populations including 35,000 Christians. Buridhanga village was also another cyclone affected area being visited. The communities shared that there had not been much help from NGOs or government immediately after the cyclone. Since most of the Christians are fishermen, they were one of the most vulnerable victims living in abject poverty without employments. Rev Bhobas Biswas met with Freddy De Alwis and shared about the critical situation people are faced with. Rev Biswas is also one of the fishermen and serving as a pastor in Baptist Singha Church.

It was shared that one of the Baptist church in the village has been completely destroyed due to the cyclone, however a foundation for the new building had just been set up. National Council of Churches in Bangladesh (NCCB) is also planning to build a church in the same place with support from Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK). However despite PCK contribution, there is still need for more financial support (around 80,000 BDT) to complete the building.

Chila, a small village near river Pshur was also one of the badly cyclone stricken areas. The Christian communities were living in desperate situations and hardly had the necessary aid for survival. Most of the families were living under the tin shades and the food was also scarce. Around 35,000 BDK approximately is needed to help them build small bamboo houses and obtain basic necessities of life.

Mekong Ecumenical Partnership Program (MEPP)

Quarterly Report for January-March 2008

CCA-MEPP staff: Janejinda Pawadee

From January-March 2008, MEPP organised three capacity building programs in collaboration with Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC), Social Development and Service Unit (SDSU) of Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) and Northern Development Foundation (NDF).

1. 5th Lay Mobilisation Training

(28-30 January 2008, Cambodia)

This training is the fifth and final module of the pilot project for the leadership training curriculum entitled “The Whole People of God, Responding to His Call”. The training will take place in Svay Rieng Province with the participants who took part in the first four modules. MEPP intended to complete the project in 2007, however due to logistical constraints the last session continued this year as well. The last training of this program will be held from 7-9 May 2008.

The project aims to produce a curriculum designed for pastors’ leadership training in the churches. So that the participants can use the gained knowledge and skills in their own communities and churches do develop God’s mission. This last module intends to help participants understand how the scriptures can be studied and communicated through preaching effectively.

2. Women Exchange Program

(28 April-2 May, Thailand)

MEPP will be organising a five-day Women Exchange Program for participants from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. Women from the above mentioned countries will visit Chiang Mai and will learn about women’s projects in Thailand. The program will comprise of three exchanges, among which the first will be for Laos women. The event was suppose to take place in March, however due to the unavailability of some participants the program dates were extended to 28 April–2 May 2008.

3. Mekong Youth Training

(4-28 March, Chiang Mai, Thailand)

Mekong Youth Training on “Sustainable Development” will bring together 15-18 youth participants from Mekong churches. The training will take place at YMCA International Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The project seeks to provide capacity building training for church leaders and young ecumenists in the Mekong sub-region (Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos) to strengthen the capacity of churches to address the issues related to sustainable development. The program will assist member churches in the Mekong sub-region to translate sustainable development strategies into concrete local actions through the exchange of knowledge and experiences. This will enhance ecumenical networking and cooperation of churches and related organisations in the Mekong sub-region. Therefore this will enable opportunities for theological reflection on the holistic nature of sustainable development for communities.

Trainings/meetings attended:

Trainings for Diakonia Partners: Audit training for Diakonia partners was held on 29 January, in which around twenty people participated. A resource person from Management Information Consultant Company helped participants understand auditing issues and legalities in NGO structures. The training equipped participants with skills needed for solving issues regarding accounts and auditing, and gave them orientation into Diakonia's finance system.

Trainings on Logical Framework Approach (LFA) were held for Diakonia partners on 18-20 February and 5-6 March. Around twenty participants attended the trainings including MEPP coordinator. Prof. Yasutoshi Yamada, a researcher for Diakonia was the resource person who facilitated discussions. Prof. Yamada introduced participants to LFA approach and other similar strategies such as Team Up and Project Cycle Management (PCM). In the training participants had a chance to learn about LFA strategies and they were able to enhance their analytical, planning and monitoring skills. MEPP Consultant gained more knowledge and skills from trainings provided by Diakonia.

Meetings with SDSU and YMCA: In this quarter, MEPP has several meetings with the Social Development and Service Unit (SDSU) of CCT and the YMCA Northern Development Foundation to organise MEPP activities including exchange program for Laos women and Youth Training on "Sustainable Development". MEPP coordinator also made a visit to several churches to conduct survey on development projects for exposure. MEPP collaborated with YMCA Northern Development Foundation in planning to organise MEPP programs. YMCA also helped MEPP to coordinate exposure and study tour programs for various groups.

Visit to Cambodia and Vietnam: MEPP Consultant together with Dr. Prawate Khidarn, CCA General Secretary, Dr Mathews George from WCC and Rev. Huh Chun Jung, MEPP Consultant attended Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC) General Assembly in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 26-29 March.

The 3rd General Assembly of KCC addressed the theme "Christian Witness and Unity in a Pluralistic Cambodia". Around 100 delegates representing KCC member churches participated in the event. Worships, bible studies, thematic presentation, program report,

group discussion, strategic planning for next five year's programs were part of the Assembly program.

Dr. Prawate Khid-arn delivered a message at the opening session of Assembly with reference to Luke 24: 13-35. In his address and he reminded the delegates about the journey of "the road to Emmaus" by addressing the Assembly theme.

Dr. Mathews George, former Executive Secretary of CCA was instrumental in founding KCC in 1998, by bringing together various denominations and missionary groups. KCC became a member of CCA at its General Assembly in Tomohon Indonesia in June 2000. KCC is the only ecumenical organisation in the country which has membership of a wide range of churches and denominations from various provinces of the country.

The CCA team was also able visit churches in Vietnam from 29-31 March. One of the visited churches was Evangelical Church in Vietnam (ECV), where many church leaders were met and the political situation of Vietnam and churches response was discussed. It was shared that the numbers of new members have increased in the past few years. The evangelical churches have more religious freedom as compared to the past and ECV is now recognised by the Vietnamese government.

CCA – UN/ESCAP Project
Strengthening of Life Skills for Positive Youth Health Behaviour
Quarterly report for January – March 2008

Emmanuel Ilagan
CCA-UN/ESCAP Consultant

Funding request and new CCA-UN/ESCAP Consultant

During the month of January 2008 Ms. Shirley Susan, former CCA-UN/ESCAP Consultant prepared the funding request for Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED)– Church Development Service for January-June 2008 before joining UNICEF. She concluded her work with the CCA UN/ESCAP project.

To replace Ms Susan, Rev. Emmanuel Ilagan, former CCA Consultant (1997 to 2000) for the UN/ESCAP Project was appointed as the new consultant. Rev. Ilagan assumed the position on 1 February 2008. Ms. Shirley Susan provided Rev Ilagan with an overview of the project and handed over relevant documents.

Meeting with UN/ESCAP officers

On 3 March, Dr. Prawate Khid-arn and Rev. Emmanuel Ilagan met with the key officials of UN/ESCAP in Bangkok for introducing new CCA Consultant. They met with Ms. Yu Kanosue, Technical Staff; Ms Thelma Kay, Director, Emerging Social Issues Division (ESID); Mr. Guenaddy Fedorov, Chief, Health and Development Section, ESID; and Ms. Shirley Susan. Both Ms. Key and Mr. Federov expressed their support for the joint CCA-UN/ESCAP project. In this meeting they also discussed the need to release the funds soonest so that the participating countries can continue their work.

From 4-5 March, Dr. Prawate Kid-arn, CCA General Secretary together with Dr. Rienzie Perera, CCA Associate General Secretary for Finance and Administration, had a meeting with Rev. Emmanuel Ilagan on the administrative arrangements for the Manila office.

Focus Group Discussion Questions and Monitoring Questionnaire

During February and March Rev. Ilagan drafted questions for the focus group discussions with peer educators to be conducted by Field Supervisors. Ms. Kanosue drafted a questionnaire for use in monitoring the outcome of peer education training activities and feedback was given by Rev. Ilagan on the questionnaire. Both documents were shared among Ms. Kanosue, Rev. Ilagan and Mr. Marco of UN/ESCAP to make them as relevant and effective as possible.

Funding project and continuing activities

In March, there was a partial release of funding for the project, however the whole amount needed by all the four (4) participating countries for January to June 2008 was not fully released. Recognising the importance of funding the activities of participating countries, both Ms. Yu and Rev. Ilagan continued to follow up the release of funds with CCA and EED. As a way to cope with the insufficient funding and in order to sustain the momentum of the project, the Letter of Agreement with one country, i.e., China was signed.

HIV/AIDS Program

Quarterly Report for January-March 2008

CCA-HIV/AIDS Program staff: Fr Philip Kuruvilla

1. National Training Program on HIV/AIDS

(27 – 30 January 2008 Yangon, Myanmar)

Due to the political crises in Myanmar, the National Training Program was twice postponed in 2007, and was finally held in Yangon hosted by Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC). The theme “Behaviour Change and Communication” was addressed by twenty-five participants including youth, field workers and representatives from the Catholic Church.

The direction of the program was set by the resource person Mr. Ja Naw, coordinator for MCC-AIDS Program in the first session, when a ‘one year plan’ was introduced to the participants. Each group shared experiences from their own fields and contexts. The Self Help Groups (SHGs) were one of the most vibrant participants, with an experience of working with fifty-nine churches in Myanmar. They promised to continue working along with People Living with AIDS (PLWA) groups and ensured further action with the church members. The Youth Group also shared their idea of holding ‘Behaviour Change and Communication’ sessions in their respective churches. They showed interest in organising exposure trips and working for condom promotion campaigns. The participants despite diverse ethnic and tribal backgrounds carried out activities in spirit of mutual trust and solidarity. The wide experience of Mr. Ja Naw working in the field of HIV/AIDS issue with the grassroots workers made a positive contribution to the training.

However some of the constraints faced during the training were related to the sequence of sessions. The session on general information on HIV and AIDS was placed on the second day rather than the beginning due to the availability of resource persons. Language was also one of the constraints in smooth communication, however to overcome this problem translations were made.

The MCC had a very positive approach in dealing with the HIV/AIDS issue, as the program was conducted in a highly professional manner. MCC was confident that they will be able to receive evaluations from the participants in given time, as the training has equipped them with adequate skills, knowledge and experience in the field. The commitment to persuade each church over making a policy on HIV/AIDS issue and its implementation was made by MCC.

2. National Training Program on HIV/AIDS

(7-10 March 2008 Lahore, Pakistan)

A long felt need by National Council of Churches in Pakistan (NCCP) was fulfilled when the National Training Program on HIV/AIDS took place at the NCCP Ecumenical Centre in Lahore. The training workshop on ‘Life skills and prevention of HIV/AIDS’, was part of a continued commitment of NCCP on the HIV/AIDS issue in partnership with CCA,

Pakistani churches, civil society actors and non governmental organisations. Around thirty-four participants took part in the workshop.

The training was focused on young people. Mr. Victor Azariah, General Secretary of NCCP gave detailed orientation about the program. He expressed his gratitude to CCA for its support. He shared on churches' commitment in promoting awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among the young people in Pakistan. He asked participants to be proactive and get involved in the workshop effectively.

The sessions began everyday with bible studies from women and postgraduate students from Gujranwala Theological Seminary. Dr Tariq Rathore from Institute for Health, Development and Community Sciences in the first session reflected on the 'Prevention of Epidemic and the Role of Youth'. He highlighted the role of youth in terms of their contribution towards combating HIV/AIDS. He also gave information about the high risk groups' and briefed the participants about people falling in this category, such as Commercial Sex Workers (CSW), Men having Sex with Men (MSM), long route truck drivers, drug addicts especially Intravenous Drug Users (IDUs), doctors and pharmacists.

Another session was conducted by the Institute of Health, Development and Community Sciences (IHDCS), where a case study from "PHATE – in – Youth" project was presented by Mr. Naveed Akhtar and Mr. Shahzad Khurram, trainers from IHDCS. "PHATE –in Youth", a project of IHDCS in district Kasur is financially supported by Inter Church Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO), Netherlands, and was taken as a case study to share the positive experiences and difficulties in implementation of programs. In this session, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of working with youth in Pakistan was facilitated by Dr. Tariq Rathore and Mr. Naveed Shahzad. The process highlighted the role of youth dealing with HIV/AIDS issue and finding new ways for their involvement in related programs and projects. At the end of training sessions all participants were given certificates by Mr. Victor Azariah, Dr Tariq Rathore and Mrs. Saboohi Ayub.

Despite of many efforts from NCCP, Fr Philip Kuruvila, Consultant for HIV/AIDS could not attend the training due to visa issues. However the experience of NCCP General Secretary and Dr Simon Azariah, member of CCA Strategic Task Force was evident in the successful conclusion of the program.

3. National Churches Policy on HIV/AIDS for India (12-13 March 2008, Bangalore, India)

With National Council of Churches India (NCCI) taking the lead with support from Christian Medical Association of India, Indian Church AIDS Policy was finalised in Bangalore on 12-13 March 2008. After background work on common draft of the policy in two earlier meetings, the four papers made into a single draft were based on theological basis, mission engagement, church life, gender and sexuality. These documents were sent in advance to the participants for further comments and inputs from the Draft Committee which includes Dr. Daisy Dharmaraj, from Lutheran Health and

Medical Board, Ms. Edwina Perera, Program Director for International Services Association, Ms Sagarika Chetty, Dr. Vijay Aruldas and Fr Thomas Ninan. The program was sponsored partly by ICCO, whose representatives were present, including Ms. Christina De Vries.

Around seventy-five delegates at the Ecumenical Christian Centre in Whitefield, Bangalore included medical and church representatives. In this two-day event the delegates after further group discussions finalised the matter for Policy, which the Draft committee were to prepare in time for the NCCI Quadrennial in May. There it was hoped the churches would briefly discuss and pass the Policy.

CCA's role in initiating the process of a Policy for Indian churches was appreciated for supporting the first meeting for a Policy in Kolkata in 2006, and again at meetings in Delhi and Bangalore respectively. The CCA Policy was used as a basis for their policy for Indian churches. By doing this CCA was able to ensure one more Asian country to have Policy on AIDS in 2008.