



Christian Conference of Asia



Being the Church in Accompaniment with Our Co-pilgrims in Asia

**Programme
Report | 2019**



PROGRAMME REPORT 2019

**BEING THE CHURCH IN ACCOMPANIMENT WITH
OUR CO-PILGRIMS IN ASIA**



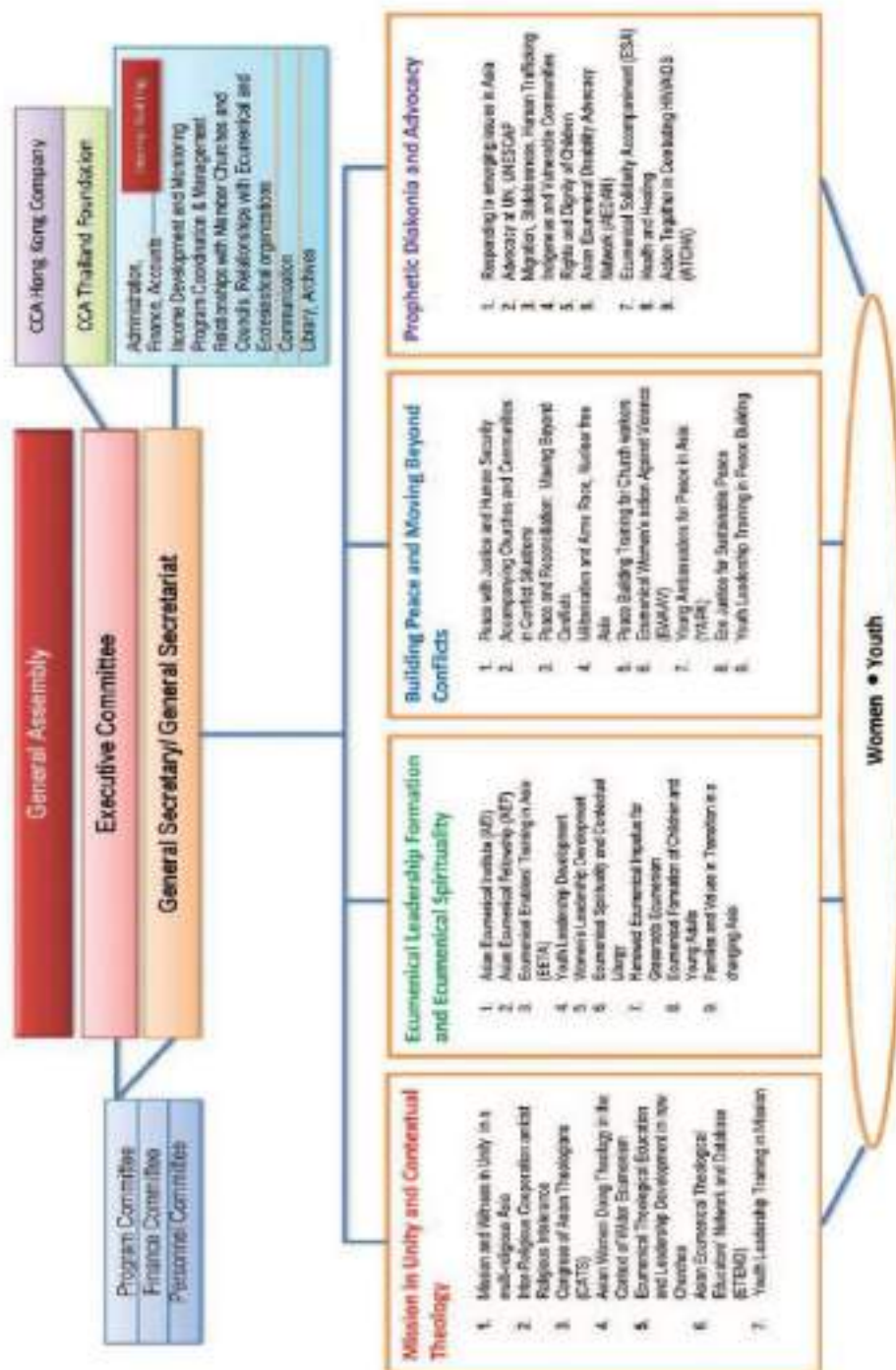
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CCA PROGRAMME STRUCTURE 2015 – 2020



FOREWORD BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Being the Church in Accompaniment with Our Co-pilgrims in Asia

The focus of CCA's programme activities in 2019 was on "Being the Church in Accompaniment with Our Co-Pilgrims in Asia". We believe that the Church is the people of God filled with the divine presence of God. The members of the Church are called to be partners in fulfilling God's mission and to commit themselves to the mission of gospel saturation. The struggle to attain the goal of peace with justice is the essence of the gospel. In order to attain the goal of gospel saturation, the people of God are called to be partners and companions with all God's people who are co-pilgrims.

A pilgrim is not a lonely wanderer on the planet, or a pilgrimage is not merely a concept of performing a ritual, or commemoration; it is a search for truth, connection, transformation, participation, accompaniment and a path leading to peace with justice. In Asia's diverse pluralistic cultural and religious contexts, pilgrimage has elaborate significance and spiritual values. In Asian contexts, pilgrimage is also a journey of search, especially one of exalted purpose or moral significance. In various religious traditions in Asia, pilgrimage is an ongoing process that enables transformation through deep spiritual experiences. The pilgrimage in Asia also has integral components of peace building and nurturing harmony together with our co-pilgrims. It is in this context that we need to find the relevance of being a Church in accompaniment with our co-pilgrims in Asia.

The Church has a responsibility to equip and prepare all members of the Church to be co-pilgrims in God's mission. The

Church in Asia is called to participate in God's mission of a spiritual journey of pilgrimage in the struggle for peace with justice. However, the reality is that more and more people are wary of institutional forms of the Church for many reasons. The emerging and pressing need is to learn how to be a catalyst in being the Church in Asia, how to be a good partner and companion with our co-pilgrims in the diverse cultural and religious contexts in Asia in the spirit of Christ's love. As a body of Christ, the Church in Asia is called to witness Christ in the midst of increasing painful realities of fragmented communities in Asia today. God is inviting his people to be part of his mission of re-building and reshaping a community of justice and peace everywhere. God invites all God's people to be partners and co-pilgrims. The members of the Church in Asia are called to commit themselves to struggle with the contemporary social realities, and they are called to take part in a pilgrimage of struggle for peace with justice.

The programmes and activities of Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) during the year 2019 were focused on churches in accompaniment with our co-pilgrims in Asia, and aimed at encouraging churches to accompany people in diverse contexts to be co-pilgrims in our common struggle for peace with justice.

This report narrates various activities carried out in 2019.

Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary, CCA

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Coordination of Administration and Programmes

The overall coordination of the programmes, administration and related organisational matters are the main responsibility of the General Secretary of the CCA as mandated by the constitution of the CCA. The General Secretary, with the assistance of other members of the secretariat, oversees and implements the coordination of programmes, activities and administration on a day to day basis. Income development and monitoring, relationships with member churches and councils as well as relationships with ecumenical and ecclesiastical organisations and communications are also part of the responsibility of the General Secretary as per the organisational structure and assigned mandates.

Programmes and Coordination

The General Secretary, who is responsible for the overall coordination and supervision of the implementation and monitoring of all programme areas, provided leadership in the coordination of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and activities of CCA in 2019 as well.

The General Secretary's mandates also included responsibility for strengthening relationships with member churches and councils, and one of the main responsibilities includes liaising with the governing board and advisory bodies. Building relationships with governments and inter-governmental organisations are also part of the specific responsibility of the General Secretary

Through the coordination and supervision of the General Secretary, the staff members in the CCA Secretariat, shared and promoted programmes and activities with member churches and councils throughout the year, and encouraged member churches and councils to engage in joint action and ministries that manifest unity in Christ in Asia. Several programmes and activities were initiated by the CCA Secretariat jointly with member churches and councils in 2019 too, and the member churches shared human and financial resources generously to implement the programmes. The responsibility of the General Secretary and the staff in the Secretariat in 2019 also included accompanying churches in capacity-building of member constituencies.

As per the new constitution and the organisational structure of CCA, the General Secretary is mandated to build and strengthen relationships with other ecumenical organisations within the region and globally, as well as with other regional ecumenical organisations (REOs) and with the global ecumenical movement through the World Council of Churches (WCC). In 2019, the General Secretariat and his colleagues were involved in building up and strengthening relations with different regional and global ecumenical organisations including the WCC and other REOs.

The General Secretary has been taking the lead in maintaining a close relationship with the Roman Catholic Church in Asia through the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), and other regional bodies like the Asia Evangelical

Alliance (AEA). Special attention has also been made to initiate relations with the Pentecostal Churches in Asia.

The General Secretary has made several efforts to develop churches that are not yet members of the CCA, including churches in Brunei, the Central Asian Republics, Mauritius, People's Republic of China, Vietnam, and Mongolia as well as civil society organisations and interfaith organisations in Asia.

Liaison with Governing Board and Advisory Committees

The General Secretary, who has the main responsibility of liaising with the governing boards and advisory committees of the CCA, took the lead in organising and conducting the meetings of the Officers, Executive Committee and other sub-committees. The meetings of the Executive Committee and sub-committees of CCA were held during the year 2019.

Executive Committee Meeting

13-18 July 2019 / Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The Executive Committee of CCA met from 13 to 18 July 2019 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. A country where the Church and Christianity were completely erased from history and forbidden until the early 1990s, holding a meeting of the CCA Executive Committee in Cambodia was significant and it was the first time in the Asian ecumenical history that an important event like CCA executive committee was held in Cambodia.

The Executive Committee in its various sessions received and discussed reports on programmes and activities, finan-

cial sustainability and CCA headquarters building project. The Executive Committee made several major decisions which included organisational/programme evaluation; theme and venue of CCA's 15th General Assembly; policies and guidelines to deal with Conflicts of Interests; Code of Conduct for Organisational Management and Governance; guidelines for processing new membership applications; a consensus model of decision-making; and staff rules and regulations. The Executive Committee also unanimously voted to re-elect the CCA General Secretary, Dr Mathews George Chunakara, for a second term.

The Executive Committee which is composed of pan-Asian members of CCA visited the headquarters of the Kampuchea Christian Council (KCC), which was founded in 1997 with the support of the CCA. During the meeting, a joint meeting of the CCA Executive Committee members and representatives of the KCC member churches was addressed by the Moderator and General Secretary of CCA.

Minister of Religious Affairs of the Royal Kingdom of Cambodia, Mr. Him Chhem, and the Vice Minister, Mr. Phlok Phan attended the meeting along with senior staff members of the Minister of Religious Affairs.

Finance Committee Meeting

15 July 2019 / Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The Finance Committee of the CCA met in conjunction with the Executive Committee meeting, which was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 15 July 2019.

The Finance Committee reviewed the current financial situation of the CCA, revised the budget of the year 2019 and worked

out a framework of the budget for the year 2020.

As per the new Constitution of the CCA, the Executive Committee appoints the Finance Committee constituting experts related to financial matters. At present, the following members are serving on the Finance Committee: Mr. Augustine Deepak Karmakar, Certified Public Chartered Accountant, Bangladesh and Treasurer of the CCA; Mr. Patrick Yuen, Certified Public Chartered Accountant and Financial Advisor to the Hong Kong Christian Council and Hong Kong Christian Schools and Colleges; Mr. Israel Paulraj, Financial Consultant and Director of Companies in Sri Lanka, formerly Treasurer of the Anglican Church in Sri Lanka, NCC Sri Lanka and Honorary Treasurer of the CCA; Mr. Nuttee Kunlacharnpises, Financial Consultant and Pension Fund Manager of the Church of Christ in Thailand; Advocate Robert Bruce C., Treasurer of the Church of South India (CSI) and Director of the CSI Trust Association; Rev. Diana Tana, Vice Moderator of the CCA, Methodist Church of New Zealand; Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, General Secretary, CCA.

CCA Officers' Meeting

The Officers of CCA met three times in 2019. The meetings were opportunities for not only making decisions between Executive Committee meetings but also occasions for reviewing and monitoring the ongoing work of CCA.

CCA Officers' Meeting - January 2019

15-16 January 2019 / Phnom Penh, Cambodia

CCA Officers met in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 15 to 16 January 2019. The

members comprising Archbishop Willem T.P. Simarmata (Moderator), Dr. Mathews George Chunakara (General Secretary) and Mr. Augustine Karmakar (Treasurer).

The Officers reviewed the decision of the Executive Committee with regard to the 15th General Assembly of CCA and also the proposals with regard to the development of CCA's property in Chiang Mai. During their stay in Phnom Penh, the Officers met with the officials of the Ministry of Religion of the Cambodian government. His Excellency Mr. Him Chhem, Minister of Religion, His Excellency Mr. Phlok Phan, Deputy Minister and Permanent Secretary of State, and Mr. Chea Nareth, Director of Cabinet, together with a team of other high-ranking officials of the Cambodian government were present at the meeting with the CCA leadership.

CCA Officers' Meeting - July 2019

15 July 2019 / Phnom Penh, Cambodia

In conjunction with the Executive Committee of CCA, a meeting of the Officers was held in Phnom Penh. The main purpose of the meeting was to review the agenda of the Executive Committee meeting as well as to review the work and performance appraisal of the General Secretary of CCA.

CCA Officers' Meeting - November 2019

21 November 2019 / Hsinchu, Taiwan

CCA Officers met on 21 November 2019 at Hsinchu, Taiwan, which was the venue of the Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly (AEWA). The meeting was mainly to review the progress of preparations for the forthcoming CCA's 15th General Assembly in 2020. The officers discussed the assembly venue, the programme schedule, seat allocation of delegates and other matters

related to the assembly preparation. The officers also received the report on the upcoming programmes of CCA in 2020.

CCA Company, Hong Kong

The CCA is registered and incorporated in Hong Kong as a private limited liability company (limited by guarantee). As per the mandate of the registered company in Hong Kong, in accordance with the decisions and mandates assigned by the Executive Committee, the CCA is eligible to acquire, hold, administer, manage, improve, maintain, transact, and facilitate dealings related to the CCA's movable and immovable properties, assets, investments, and funds. The special tasks assigned to the CCA Company is as per the constitutional requirement stipulated in the provisions of Article 11 of the CCA Constitution approved by the General Assembly of the CCA. The members of the CCA Company are the members of the Executive Committee of the CCA and the Directors of the Company are appointed from time to time by the CCA Executive Committee.

The following members were elected by the CCA Executive Committee to be members of the Directors' Board in 2019: Bishop Thomas Soo, Anglican Church in Hong Kong; Dr. Tong Wing Sze, Member of CCA Executive Committee; Rev. Eric So, Hong Kong Council of Churches of Christ in China; Rev. Po Kam Cheong, Hong Kong Christian Council; Rev. Dr. Kim Jong-goo, Methodist Church in Korea; Dr. Mathews George Chunakara (Company Secretary / Ex. Officio).

Investment Committee, Hong Kong

During 2019, the CCA Investment Commit-

tee met several times to review the status of CCA's investments in Hong Kong. The Investment Committee of the CCA is constituted by the CCA Executive Committee to oversee the investments of the CCA in Hong Kong. The following members served in 2019 on the Hong Kong-based Committee: Bishop Thomas Soo, Dr. Tong Wing Sze, Rev. Eric So, and Mr. Patrick Yuen, a member of the Finance Committee of CCA.

CCA Foundation Thailand

30 April 2019 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

The CCA Foundation Thailand is a legal entity registered in Thailand as per Thai laws, under which the CCA has the functioning of its office based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The CCA Foundation sponsors the visa and work permit applications of the international staff working at the Chiang Mai office. The Foundation has a committee which consists of the CCA General Secretary as well as representatives of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), who are Thai citizens.

The CCA Executive Committee appointed the following members of the Board of the CCA Foundation in 2019: Dr. Pradit Takerngrangsarit, President; Mr. Surapong Mittrakul, CCT General Secretary; Mrs. Supaporn Yarnasarn, CCA Executive Committee Member; Dr. Rux Prompalit, President, Payap University; Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, former General Secretary, CCA; Dr. Chuleepran Srisoontorn, former member of CCA General Committee; Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, General Secretary, CCA

A meeting of the CCA Foundation Thailand was held in April 2019 at the headquarters of CCA in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Church and Ecumenical Relations

The General Secretary and other staff members visited and participated in several programmes and activities as well as special events of member churches, councils, related ecumenical organisations, regional and global ecumenical organisations and world confessional bodies during the year 2019.

Visits to Member Churches, Councils and Ecumenical Partners

In 2019 also the General Secretariat facilitated and carried out the ecumenical relationships with member churches and councils, related ecumenical organisations, regional and global ecumenical organisations and world confessional bodies. The initiatives, as part of strengthening the church and ecumenical relations, helped building stronger networks and also promoted the involvement and participation of CCA member constituencies with a greater sense of ownership.

The General Secretary attended various programme and delivered keynote addresses or thematic addresses at various church and ecumenical events in 2019. As part of strengthening church and ecumenical relations, General Secretary's visits to member churches and councils, as well as participation in events by the CCA General Secretary or represented by CCA staff during the year 2019, are listed below:

- Meeting with the Special Envoy of the President of Republic Indonesia on 28 January 2019, (General Secretary).
- Meeting with the leaders of national Islamic organisations in Indonesia,

Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in Jakarta, Indonesia on 28 January 2019, (General Secretary).

- Meeting with the leadership of CCA member churches in Indonesia and addressing the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) Central Committee Meeting in Indonesia in Bogor, Indonesia on 29 January 2019, (General Secretary).
- Visit to CCT headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, 31 January 2019, (General Secretary).
- South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) Interfaith Platform Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 11–12 March 2019, (Rosiana Purnomo).
- Graduation ceremony of Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College in Maelah Refugee Camp at Maesot, Thailand on 24 March 2019, (Rev. Jung Eun Grace Moon).
- Church and Society Conference of PGI in Manado, Indonesia, 28–31 March 2019, (Rev. Jung Eun Grace Moon).
- CCA Assembly planning meeting with the National Council of Churches in India and church leaders in India, in New Delhi, India, 10–12 April 2019, (General Secretary).
- Visit to churches in Sri Lanka immediately after the Easter day tragedy, 21–23 April 2019, (General Secretary).
- Meetings with NCC Sri Lanka, and Methodist Church in Sri Lanka, 21–22 April 2019, (General Secretary).
- Keynote Address at the Opening session of the WCC-CCA International Consultation on Statelessness and Human Trafficking in Asia: Prevention, Reduction and Protection, 20–23 May 2019, (General Secretary).

- Meeting with the Officials of the United Nations Women Asia Pacific region May, (General Secretary, Rev. Kim Kyrie, CCA Programme Committee moderator and Ms. Sunila Ammar, Coordinator of EWAAV Programme).
- Asia Regional Committee Meeting of the CONGO-UN, Bangkok, Thailand, May 2019, (General Secretary and Ms. Sunila Ammar).
- Meeting of the Core Group of the Asian Diaspora in the Arabian Gulf, Bahrain, May (Dr. Reynaldo Racaza Ty).
- Visit and meeting with CCA member churches and councils in Taiwan, 3–4 June 2019. General Secretariat (GS) was accompanied by programme coordinators Rev. Jung Eun Moon, Dr. Ronald Lalthanmawia, and Rosiana Purnomo.
- Bread for the World - EMW - EKD - WCC - UEM International Consultation preparing for the 11th Assembly of WCC in Wuppertal, Germany, 16–19 June 2019, (General Secretary).
- Attended the WCC & Regional Ecumenical Organisations (REO) General Secretaries' Annual Meeting in Geneva, 30 June – 4 July 2019, (General Secretary).
- Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula (EFK), Bangkok, Thailand, 10–12 July 2019, (Rev. Jung Eun Grace Moon).
- Addressed the opening session of the 2nd Mission Conference of International Myanmar Baptist Fellowship in Chiang Mai, Thailand on 25 September 2019, (General Secretary).
- Visit to Rohingya Refugee Camps in Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, 9–10 October 2019 (General Secretary).
- Visit to the National Council of Churches in Bangladesh (NCCB), Church of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Baptist Churches Sangha on October 11 2019, (General Secretary).
- Address at the South Asia regional consultation on Ecumenical Women's Action against Violence, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 11–12 October 2019 (General Secretary).
- 39th Annual meeting of International Committee of Fellowship of Least Coin, 12–19 October, Accra, Ghana, (Rev. Jung Eun Grace Moon).
- Keynote address delivered at the WCC-CCA international consultation on Rights and Dignity of Children, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 14–16 October 2019, (General Secretary).
- Attended the 17th General Assembly of PGI at Waingapu, Indonesia on 8–13 November 2019, (Rosiana Purnomo and Jay Roy).
- Keynote address at the opening session of the WCC-CCA Eco School, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 5 November 2019, (General Secretary).
- Introductory address at the Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly (AEWA) in Hsinchu, Taiwan, 22 November 2019, (General Secretary).
- Thematic address at the Opening WCC-CCA Asia Regional Consultation on Evangelism and Missional Witness in a Multi-Religious Asia, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 30 November 2019, (General Secretary).
- Keynote address at the WCC-CCA Training on Ecumenical Diakonia and Development, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 4 December 2019, (General Secretary).

General Secretary's Pastoral Solidarity Visit to Sri Lanka

21-23 April 2019/ Colombo, Sri Lanka

On 21 April 2019, Easter Sunday, three churches in Sri Lanka and three luxury hotels in the commercial capital city Colombo were targeted in a series of coordinated terrorist suicide bombings. 259 people were killed and at least 500 were injured. The church bombings were carried out during Easter services in Negombo, Batticaloa, and Colombo. The successive eight powerful blasts left devastation in three churches and other places, including the capital's well-known St. Anthony's Shrine, a historic Roman Catholic Church which traces its roots back to the 18th century. St. Sebastian's church in Negombo, located north of Colombo, and Zion church located in the eastern coastal city of Batticaloa were the two other churches hit. The attack on Sunday was the worst in Sri Lanka since the civil war ended a decade ago.

Hearing this shocking news, the CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunnakara condemned the attack and in his statement said that the CCA believed the heinous acts of terrorism to be incompatible with the values of any religious teachings or moral values of a civilised society. He added, "Violent attacks such as these are aimed at undermining the unity and religious tolerance of the people of any nation which will only push us further to a situation of anarchy and negation of rule of law." He further stated, "The international community has the responsibility to make every effort to combat the scourge of terrorism and ensure peace and security in the world."

Immediately after this bomb attack, the CCA General Secretary undertook a pas-

toral solidarity visit to Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 21–23 April 2019. In his meeting with the leaders and representatives of member churches and NCC Sri Lanka and other interreligious leaders in Sri Lanka, it was widely agreed that there should be collective efforts to overcome religious intolerance and to provide a common platform for various religions to come together and reflect on cooperative ways in promoting communal harmony in building peace and strengthening interreligious trust and respect in Asia. To promote interreligious cooperation amidst growing religious intolerance and conflicts in Asia, CCA has scheduled to organise an Asian Interreligious Leaders' Summit in 2020.

Visits of Church Leaders and Ecumenical Partners to CCA

During the year 2019, various church and ecumenical leaders representing churches and ecumenical organisations from around the world visited the CCA headquarters and had meetings with the CCA General Secretary and staff. Visits and meetings are listed below:

- Visit of the students of Yonsei United Graduate School of Theology on 7 January 2019.
- Visit of Cambodian church leaders, 10 January 2019.
- Visit of Presbyterian Church (USA) World Mission – Asia Pacific Area Coordinator, Rev. Mienda Uriarte, 26 January 2019.
- Visit of the Executive Committee of the Association of Christian Institutes for Social Concerns in Asia (ACISCA), 19–20 March 2019.
- Visit of the Executive Committee members of the Asian Church Wom-

en's Conference (ACWC), 8 April 2019.

- Visit of Divinity School of Chung Chi College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong's students and staff led by Rev. Dr. Tobias Brandner, 20 May 2019.
- Visit of Rev. Martin Krieg from Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW), 2 August 2019.
- Visit of Mr. Ajit Hazra of the World Vision International, 4 October 2019.

Relations with Ecumenical Partners

World Council of Churches: Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP) International Reference Group Meeting 2019

The CCA hosted the International Reference Group meeting of the WCC PJP as well as the inauguration of the PJP Asia Focus 2019, which was held from 3–7 March 2019 at CCA Headquarters, Chiang Mai, Thailand. The PJP focus for 2019 was Asia and this meeting aimed to reflect on reports on the situations in Asia through the lens of the pilgrimage's global thematic focus on racism. An interreligious fellowship gathering and dinner reception were organised in conjunction with the PJP meeting. Representatives of seven religious communities in Chiang Mai attended and offered prayers of peace.

The CCA General Secretary served as a member of the working group appointed by the WCC General Secretary to develop the Guidelines for WCC and REO Relations. The Guidelines are now finalised and have been adopted formally at a meeting of REO General Secretaries and WCC General Secretaries together with senior staff lead-

ership of WCC.

As the PJP focus in 2019 was on Asia, WCC decided to organise programmes related to different programme desks of WCC in Asia. As per the discussions and agreements reached between WCC staff and CCA General Secretary, the following programmes were organised in Asia in 2019:

- PJP Asia solidarity team of WCC visits to Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar and border area of Thailand and Burma
- Meetings of PJP Reference Group and PJP theological working group
- WCC-CCA International Consultation on Statelessness and Human Trafficking in Asia: Prevention, Reduction, and Protection (20–23 May 2019)
- WCC-CCA Regional Consultation on Child Rights Protection and Advocacy to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (13–16 October 2019)
- WCC-CCA Eco School on Water, Food and Climate Justice (4–17 November 2019)
- WCC-CCA Asia Regional Consultation on "Evangelism and Missional Witness in a Multi-Religious Asia" (30 November – 5 December 2019)
- WCC-CCA Training on Ecumenical Diaconia and Development (4–8 December 2019)

Association of the Christian Institutes for Social Concerns in Asia (ACISCA)

The ACISCA is a region-wide association of Christian lay groups, academics, institutes,

and centres for social concerns in Asia which was supported by CCA for years, including the founding of ACISCA in 1970.

The ACISCA executive committee meeting was held at the headquarters of the CCA and hosted by CCA from 19–20 March 2019, mainly to discuss a strategic programme plan to revive the activities of ACISCA, and re-build ecumenical solidarity and partnership among the members of ACISCA in collaboration with CCA.

The executive committee reiterated its intention of seeking more active collaboration with CCA to revitalise the ACISCA in the future. It recalled the ecumenical journey in the field of lay training in Asia through the work of the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC), the forerunner of CCA and its initiative in the founding of ACISCA at EACC-sponsored consultations in Perth, Australia in 1969 as well as at the OISO Academy House, Japan in 1970.

Ms. Nancy Caluya, President, and Fr. Dr. Mathew Chandrankunnel, Secretary of the ACISCA presented the proposed plan of action for future programmes and priorities, and they emphasized the need for staff capacity-building in ACISCA member institutes.

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, General Secretary of CCA said that the CCA Secretariat was mandated by its executive committee to initiate joint ecumenical programmes together with other ecumenical organisations and institutions in Asia as part of "Collaborative Ecumenical Partnership in Programmes and Activities" (CEPPA). It was agreed that ACISCA and CCA will be engaged in joint ecumenical formation and leadership development training programmes in the future. The executive committee also decided to commemorate

the Golden Jubilee of ACISCA in conjunction with the 15th General Assembly of CCA, which will be held in 2020. The Golden Jubilee commemorative event in 2020 will include historical reflections of ACISCA members' ecumenical journeys and witness in different Asian countries over the past 50 years, recognise the contributions and services of former ACISCA leaders and introduce the ongoing work and ecumenical witness of all active members of ACISCA. The fifty-year history of ACISCA will be released during the Golden Jubilee event. ACISCA membership includes 55 ecumenical lay leadership training institutes and programme centres dealing with Christian witness and social concerns in different parts of Asia.

The members of the Executive Committee constituted at the ACISCA General Assembly in August 2018 are Ms. Nancy Caluya, Philippines (President), Fr. Dr. Mathew Chandrankunnel, India (Secretary), Mr. Surakit Kamonrat, Thailand (Treasurer), Mr. Sandesh Sudhakar, India, and Rev. Grace Moon, CCA (Ex-Officio).

Asian Church Women's Conference (ACWC)

Nine members of the Executive Committee of ACWC visited the CCA Headquarters on 8 April 2019. They discussed the further direction of the ecumenical movement in Asia with CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara.

Bread for the World

In the context of the beginning of a new phase of programme cycle supported by the Bread for the World, Germany, Asia department, Programme Desk Officer, Ms. Kathrin Theuer visited CCA on 29

April 2019. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the ongoing Bread for the World supported activities of CCA. A detailed discussion of the ATCHAA programme (HIV Special programme of CCA) was held with the programme staff. The financial audit requirements and the programme report were reviewed and updated. A meeting was also held with the staff of CCA on the ongoing and upcoming programme plans for 2019 and beyond. The new proposal for CCA for a three-year period (2020-2022) starting from 2020 was developed and submitted in June 2019.

Two staff members, Ronald Lalthanmawia and Jay Roy Tipayan, attended the Training on Financial Management and new Bread for the World (BfdW) Cooperation and Audit Agreements which was held from 10–12 April 2019 at Kowloon, Hong Kong. There were 25 participants from 11 BfdW partners in Asia. The training was facilitated by BfdW staff. The main objective of the meeting was to address the topics of financial management and new agreements in a joint exchange. The training addressed various topics related to the new cooperation agreement and, new audit agreement. It also had sessions on exchange rate monitoring, cost allocation, cooperation with local /international partners, funds request and financial reporting.

Mission 21

CCA participated in the 5-day workshop on Good Governance organised by Mission 21 in Bangkok, Thailand. The objective of the workshop was to enable each partner organisation to develop and strengthen its capacity, services and networks that would make them more robust, sustainable and professional in the long run. The workshop focused on four aspects: Human Resource

Development, Development of systems, Organisational Development and Development of Networks and strengthening collaboration with networks.

The Workshop particularly addressed Good Governance Assessment, especially on Human Resource Management and Capacity. The Workshop also discussed Management Audit using the Committee of Sponsoring Organisations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) system adopted by M21 and its partners. Learning for organisational improvement gained through the processes and results of the audit were also presented. The workshop was also an opportunity for partners to share their experiences in implementing good governance and design human resource development programmes and other important systems that are necessary for an organisation. Some best practices and experiences of Churches against Corruption were also shared by PGI. Examples of Complaints Mechanisms were shared by Gereja Masehi Injili Sangehe Talaud.

There were 58 participants from different churches, Council of Churches, and Church-based organisations from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. CCA also presented its programme plan for 2019 along with the existing systems and proposed initiatives towards Good Governance for its member councils and churches.

International Committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin (ICFLC)

The 39th annual meeting of ICFLC was held in Accra, Ghana from 12–19 October and was attended by 22 delegates and guests from the ICFLC's constituencies, member

organisations, and partner organisations. Rev. Jung Eun Grace Moon attended the annual meeting of FLC on behalf of CCA in 2019. The FLC, initiated in 1956 and linked to CCA for the first several years, is now a worldwide ecumenical fellowship of Christian women and a prayer movement for justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Relations with Ecclesiastical and Confessional Bodies

The CCA and the FABC have been jointly working in various areas to try to strengthen the common witness. Relations with evangelical and Pentecostal churches in Asia also are being developed through meetings and dialogue.

Income Development and Finance

The General Secretary is responsible for the coordination of income development and finance. In 2019, the responsibility of fund-raising was undertaken by the General Secretary in addition to all other responsibilities. Considering the vast operational area of the CCA in geographical terms (from Iran in West Asia to Japan in East Asia; Nepal in the North of Asia to New Zealand in the South), the number of member churches and councils, and the number of issues, concerns and themes that have to be addressed as part of ecumenical responses, the CCA needs more funds for effective implementation of planned programmes and activities.

Asian Churches' Contributions to CCA in 2019

The General Secretariat's special efforts yielded fruit and several Asian churches

made special grants for the CCA in 2019. It was encouraging to note that the level of contributions from member churches increased in 2019. In addition to this, a number of other member churches offered financial support to host programmes in the coming years.

Communications

The CCA's electronic news releases continue to be the medium through which communications with CCA's constituencies, the ecumenical world, civil society and other world bodies are sustained. The communication consultant and interns work on regularly publishing news releases on CCA's official website and send bulk e-mails via Mail Chimp to about 6000 subscribers. The communications team also manage the official Facebook and Twitter pages of the CCA, edit all website content and carry through the publications of the CCA. The communication staff, who are based at the CCA headquarters, work closely with the managers and developers of the website based in India. The domain and website were successfully migrated to a new web hosting services in November 2019.

Identifying Young Ecumenical Talents in Asia: Training and Internship

One of the programme priorities of the CCA is to facilitate leadership development and capacity-building of the youth of CCA's member churches and councils. The CCA's internship programme has been designed as a year-long leadership development training with intensive practical guidance. The 2019 batch of interns were Ms. Navya Dinah Saji (India), Mr. Chalvin Tehuayo (Indonesia), and Ms. Ruth Mathen (India).

PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES IN 2019

1. MISSION IN UNITY AND CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY

Objectives

- To accompany churches in Asia to strengthen the Church's mission and witness in multi-religious contexts;
- To assist member churches and councils of the CCA in revitalising and nurturing the unity of churches and the ecumenical movement in Asia;
- To develop contextual theological undergirding for mission and witness, while addressing emerging issues in Asia;
- To strengthen collaboration and cooperation among churches and various ecumenical actors in Asia and from other parts of the world who are engaged in mission and witness in Asia;
- To initiate, facilitate, and strengthen ecumenical theological initiatives in Asia.

Congress of Asian Theologians IX (CATS-IX)

5–10 August 2019 / Medan, Indonesia

The Ninth Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS -IX) organised from 5–10 August 2019 in Medan, Indonesia was attended by 130 participants from different parts of Asia representing different theological institutions, and churches and the CATS-IX was hosted by the Gereja Bethel Indonesia (GBI). The theme of CATS-IX was *“Reconciliation, Renewal and Restoration: Divine Indicative and Human Imperative”*. The sub-themes were: “Reconciliation: Towards the Harmony of Creation”, “Renewal: Towards the fullness of Life,” and “Restoration: Towards Affirming the Will of God.”

CCA initiated CATS in 1997 and has been making progress in challenging theologians to develop contextual Asian theologies, build new theological agendas, develop contextual and relevant hermeneutics and foster innovative theological thinking especially of the younger generation of theologians. The purpose of CATS is to provide a theological platform for Asian theologians to make contextual and multi-dimensional theological reflections on the theme in the midst of the emerging social, political, religious, economic, ecological and technological issues arising in Asia. To implement this vision and purpose of CATS, methodologically, thematic presentations, panel presentations, workshops, bible studies, interactive theological research presentations and discussions were used.

The first thematic presentation by Bishop Dr. Kuriakose Mar Theophilose highlighted the general theme of CATS-IX. He elaborated his theological concept in the light of the Trinitarian and Kenotic approaches

to reconciliation, renewal, and restoration that could engage in the process of healing broken relationships in Asia emphasizing the objective work of God through Christ. He interpreted the Trinitarian model in terms of *perichoresis* that maintains the mutual indwelling and preserves the distinctiveness of three persons within the Holy Trinity and applied it as the thriving force behind the harmonic existence of all creation. Kenotic model of stewardship and ecclesiology was interpreted as self-denial and self-giving stewardship that follows the path of Jesus Christ that was entrusted to his disciples for the reconciliation, renewal and restoration of God’s creation. Bishop Kuriakose uplifted the interconnectedness of *theosis*, a process of growing into the image of God in every aspect of life, *henosis*, the union with God, and *kenosis* the self-emptying and the theological significance of this for renewal, reconciliation and restoration.

Dr. Lily F. Apura, a feminist theologian from the Philippines presented “Reconciliation towards the Harmony of God’s Oikos,” as the second presentation. Her approach combined feminist theological reflections with the present-day dominant neo-colonialism or empires. For reconciliation towards the harmony of creation, she advocated a theology of resistance against these oppressive forces of exploitation based on greed. In addition, she presented God as a mother who created the entire universe in all its perfection and God’s original creation was good. This perfect and good creation now stands wounded and spoiled by the hegemony of patriarchy and empire in the contemporary world. The call to repentance from destructive and exploitative greed in the light of Jesus’ self-denial and sacrifice was advocated for the reconciliation towards the harmony of

God's creation in Asia.

Bishop Dr. Daniel Thiagarajah made a presentation on the sub-theme, "Renewal: Towards the fullness of Life." In the light of Asian Kenotic Christology, he presented renewal towards the fullness of life as being made meaningful and authentic in contemporary Asian contexts through Jesus Christ's renewal model. Questioning the possibilities of God's renewal towards the fullness of life in the midst of Asian poverty, sufferings, violence, oppression and describing how the hearts of the oppressors were hardened in the Bible to perpetuate oppression, he made a contextual theological reflection on Asian issues of exploitation and oppression in the diverse Asian contexts. He emphasized how Churches and Christians could not find the fullness of life in the western cultural ideology of accumulating money and power, but in following the renewal model of Jesus Christ who renews us to enjoy the fullness of life here and now on earth. Renewal and restoration as two aspects of the embodied character of God have their being as a gift of God's self-giving love in Jesus Christ.

A Roman Catholic theologian, Fr. Dr. Clarence Devadass, delivered a thematic address on "Restoration: Towards the Will of God". He focused on Asian realities that challenged us to engage in people's theology, saying, "We need to place our theology at the feet of the people of Asia." Pointing out the instances of restoration in the Bible, and contextualizing them in contemporary Asian life situations, he shared five "spokes of the wheel" of restoration in terms of justice and healing for the common good, eco-equilibrium, and technology. He also put forward five paradigm shifts in Asian theological constructions to move from exclusivity to inclusivity; from

static binaries to dynamic dialogical interplay; from ideological systematisation to a cultural systematisation of theology; from the world of ideas to the world of practical life and mission; and from theocentric to theo-praxis. He challenged and encouraged the Asian theologians to work out a creative theological narrative that could be effective in the work of multidimensional restoration by deconstructing inherited indoctrinated theological paradigms in order to reconstruct Asian restorative contextual theologies.

The theological vision of CATS-IX was enriched by a panel session on "Our Stewardship of God's Creation: Ecological Justice," by the three panellists, Rev. Dr. Joel Za Hlei Kap, Prof. Suning Siwa, and Prof. Dr. Mathew Chandrankunnel. Dr. Hlei Kap emphasized the problems of ecological justice in Myanmar. Pointing out the need for reconciliation as the issues are interconnected and associated with landlessness, rural poverty, and inequality of access to resources, his view of the urgency of reconciliation in terms of power, policy, and wealth was significant. Prof. Suning Siwa, a Taiwanese indigenous woman theologian, delivered an emotional address on the issues of loss, change, and identity crisis of Taiwan's indigenous people. She spoke about the deep and enduring influence of colonialism on the identity of indigenous people. Prof. Siwa further highlighted that the villages in Taiwan adhere to the ideas of sustainability and integrity of creation which can contribute much towards restoration of the earth. Roman Catholic priest Dr. Mathew Chandrankunnel suggested a significant theological paradigm shift from *Homo Faber* towards *Homo Custos*, emphasizing human imperative that comes from being created in the image of God and human beings as the most im-

portant custodians and reconcilers of creation.

The ambit of the theological vision of CATS-IX was widened by the Interfaith panel on "Reconciliation, Renewal and Restoration of the creation: Interfaith Perspective". The panel presentations from the Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, and Christian religious perspectives enriched and nurtured interfaith dialogue among the participants from different Christian traditions in Asia. The outstanding insight from this panel was the parallel concepts presented from different Asian religious traditions with regards to building peaceful coexistence of all people in Asia. Instead of comparing and contrasting the difference between religious ethos and doctrines, the four panellists focused on discovering the parallel points of contact that dynamically unite all religious traditions for the common good of all. Theologically, this unique session provided a platform for the wider ecumenical paradigm that significantly contributes to the healing of broken societies amidst the existing religionism, religious fundamentalism and intolerance in Asia and the world.

Bible Study materials written by 26 scholars, to reflect on the main theme and sub-themes of CATS-IX from multidimensional perspectives arising from Asian contexts were discussed each day at CATS-IX.

During the CATS-IX, the workshops on "Emerging Concerns in Asia and Theological Responses" were designed to strengthen the theological purpose of the CATS-IX. The participants were divided into five groups for workshops. The workshops were on the following topics: The Ethics of Sustainability and Development; Reconciliation and Restoration of Broken Re-

lationships among People and Nations; Restoring the Dignity and Rights of the Stateless, Trafficked, and Marginalized; Threat to the Fullness of Life: Challenges of Post-Humanism, and Prioritizing Eco-Ethics from an Ecumenical Perspective. The outcomes of the workshops were shared by their respective facilitators and it was observed that most of the discussion in the workshops had widened the scope of their theological visions and strengthened the participants by deepening their theological insights on Asian realities.

During two interactive sessions, CATS-IX provided space for Asian theologians to present their research papers on varied contextual realities through differing hermeneutical lenses and methodologies, and in response to specific contextual realities that tied in with the overall themes of Reconciliation, Restoration and Renewal. A total of 22 research presentations revealed the fecundity of Asian theological articulation, cutting edge innovative reflection and the depth and breadth of available Asian theological resources in the form of young theologians and their grounded theologies.

A fellowship meeting of women participants took place at CATS-IX, bringing together women in pastoral ministry as well as women doing theology. This fruitful fellowship meeting was also helpful in introducing and encouraging participants to become part of CCA's major ecumenical gathering of AEWA to be held in November 2019.

At the conclusion of CATS-IX, a *Communique* prepared by a representative group of Asian theologians that reflected the commitment to developing unique contextual Asian theologies was discussed in detail. The Communique was later shared on the

CCA website. The presentations and other proceedings of CATS-IX are also being prepared for publication.

Asia Regional Consultation on Evangelism and Missional Witness in a Multi-Religious Asia

30 November–5 December 2019 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

"Asia Regional Consultation on Evangelism and Missional Witness in a Multi-religious Asia," was jointly organised by the CCA and WCC from 29 November to 5 December 2019 at CCA Headquarters in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The Consultation was attended by 40 selected participants including Church leaders, ecumenical representatives, theologians, missiologists, representatives of different ecclesiastical bodies including the FABC of the Roman Catholic Church and the AEA, together with representatives of WCC from different continents.

The purpose of the consultation was to discuss how different churches in Asia have been engaging in evangelism and missional witness in their respective places, their theological affirmations, and theological education and training programmes. The effort was to explore and unearth possible methodologies and to strategies for how the Asian churches could evolve their work at local levels. The consultation was also to provide a platform for mutual learning from the experiences of Asian churches and their innovative evangelistic approaches and engagement in participating in God's mission. Kyriaki Avtzi, WCC's Programme Executive for Evangelism in Unity who outlined the initiatives undertaken by WCC since 2012 within a wider global process and implemented earlier

in the contexts of Europe, North America, and Africa and underlined the importance of this fourth regional consultation partnering with CCA to address concerns pertaining to the multi-religious Asian context.

Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah, in his thematic presentation on *Evangelism and Missional Witness in a Multi-religious Asia*, made a theological critique of the inherited evangelical and mission paradigm, pointing out its lack of shalom and suggested a shift to God's shalom with focus on the healing mission of the wounded in a multi-religious Asia today. Dr. Lily Kadoe, the representative of Myanmar Institute of Theology captured that "In conflict-torn areas, the church's mission is taking care of the refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and of course, peacebuilding is a crucial mission of the church in Myanmar."

Rev. Dr. Joseph Deva Komar, a Malaysian theologian presented the growing need to develop strategies and methodologies in the Malaysian contexts without "altering the fundamentals of the Christian faith which are non-negotiable but taking the context seriously to ensure that the gospel that we share is relevant in addressing the actual need of peoples." Julius Caesar, a theologian from the Philippines, reinforced that the present socio-economic and socio-political maladies that stem from half a millennium of foreign political control and landlessness, compel the Independent church in the Philippines more than ever to live out her national and democratic heritage and her ministry of *koinonia* and *diakonia*.

Rev. Dr. Pradit Takerngrangsarit, a representative of the CCT, critiqued the situation in Thailand and suggested that

"Evangelism and missional witness with compassionate love would bring peace and harmony to society."

Metropolitan Dr. Gabriel Mar Gregorios, a prominent Orthodox theologian from India, in his presentation stated, "Evangelization should be accompanied by signs of the Kingdom, acts of love and compassion, miracles of faith, symbolic acts repudiating values of the world and evangelization needs to be understood in the context of wider ecumenism."

Prof. Simon Biswas from Bangladesh poignantly described the challenges in his context saying, "while religious minorities are still vulnerable to targeted attacks by extremists, while land grabbing continues to be carried out with the complicity of soldiers and officials, while minority women live with the threat of kidnap and rape, justice and equality will remain mysterious."

Daniel Beni Wini Emma of Indonesia emphasized the practical impacts of religious fundamentalism and radicalism in a multi-religious context and advocated peaceful coexistence in evangelism and missional witness in Asia. In his presentation, Rev. Kang Daracheat of the Cambodian Church emphasized building relationships with non-Christians in the process of evangelization and missional witness.

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, the General Secretary of CCA, in his thematic presentation on "New Christian Missionary Movements: Challenges to Christian Witness in Asia," pointed out the problems that the Churches in Asia have been encountering due to new missionary movements and its challenges in Asia. Rev. Ebenezer Joseph, the President Bishop of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka stated

that hindrance to the Christian witness has been due to the "us vs them" approach which should be removed for the unity of Asian evangelism and missional witness that can strengthen God's mission in Asia. Father Gilbert Aranha, a representative from the FABC, emphasized the need to see the spark of truth while engaging in evangelization in a multi-religion. He writes, "While evangelizing, it is the duty of every Christian to recognise the "spark of truth" in every religion, the spark that longs for the "fullness of Truth" which is Jesus Christ. For this interreligious dialogue is a *sine qua non*."

Kanthamane, the representative of AEA, in her presentation on "Our Evangelical Tasks in Asia", stated that "Our common task is transformative evangelizing, witnessing and holistic disciple-making." Rev. Tan Tek-in, of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, emphasized the challenges posed by the prosperity gospel in Taiwan which is becoming a contentious undercurrent in evangelistic methods. In the multi-religious context of Thai-Myanmar refugee lives, Saw Kay Ray Moe, from the Thai-Myanmar Border, pinpointed the importance of mutual respect in mission. He added, "There is no problem in sharing the gospel but we still need to respect each one's beliefs and celebrate each other's religious ceremonies."

Christina Papazoglou from Greece who works with the UN Refugee Agency, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), interacted with this presentation to understand how evangelism could be carried out in a refugee camp where people were forced to be and were not there by choice and in the midst of vulnerability and the frustrations of such people

and how they negotiated the government authorities in this process. In engaging evangelism and missional witness, Solomon David from United Arab Emirates, reinforced the importance of cooperation with other religious communities engaging in interreligious advocacy towards justice, the common good and, wherever possible, standing together in solidarity with people in situations of conflict.

The following are some affirmations and insights arising from the consultation that capture the essence of evangelism and missional witness in Asian contexts:

- **Asian context needs a paradigm shift.** A shift from the inherited evangelical and mission paradigm to a multi-religious paradigm. The Churches in Asia inherited an exclusive evangelical and missiological theological paradigm that has created religious intolerance in the multi-religious contexts. This sad legacy is one of the root causes of religious intolerance as it maintains an air of superiority over all the other religions, and negates all other worship as idolatry. This paradigm is no longer relevant in the Asian multi-religious contexts.
- **Multi-religious Asia needs to take wider ecumenism seriously.** This means that evangelism and mission must be contextualized to meet the needs of Asia. Departure from the traditional paradigm will lead us to a wider ecumenical paradigm that goes beyond the traditional and reaches the multifaith and multi-religious context in Asia.
- **Mission as building the kingdom here and now on earth.** The traditional un-

derstanding of mission as church planting and development is inadequate. The shift is needed to understand mission as the ushering in of the kingdom of God by engaging in the process of doing justice in all spheres - social, political, economic, religious and ecological.

- **Holistic multidimensional evangelism and missional witness:** Mission and Evangelism in Asia must be multidimensional and holistic in its nature and paradigms. Not only the vertical dimension but the horizontal dimension must also be materialized. In the midst of the experiences of suffering and resistance, mission and evangelism must focus on the oppressed and suffering people in Asia.
- **The necessity of removing the impact of colonialism and imperialism:** Those of other faiths are still identifying Christianity as a western religion because most of Asian countries are seen to have received Christianity from the west although Christianity originated in Asia and spread to European countries. This perception hinders evangelism and missional witness in Asia and ways to end this colonial colour in our praxis and theology must be further studied.
- **Proselytization, intra-proselytization and counter-evangelism:** It is observed that proselytization among major religions and intra-proselytization within Christianity have been taking place. As a reaction to this, there are counter-evangelism initiatives by other religions such as Hindus and Buddhists in some Asian countries today.

- **Promoting the ecumenical movement:**
It is clear that a strong ecumenical movement has developed in our pilgrimage in evangelization and missional witness in Asia and the world.
- **Future theological paradigm on evangelism and mission:** Guidelines for further evangelical and missional witness were explored by addressing emerging concerns and contemporary issues related to evangelism and mission.

2.

ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP FORMATION AND ECUMENICAL SPIRITUALITY

Objectives

- To assist the ecumenical formation of a new generation of leadership in churches and ecumenical councils in Asia;
- To develop human resources committed to the renewal of ecumenical spirituality and understanding Christian tradition;
- To provide ecumenical space for sharing spiritual life among member churches and national councils in Asia.

Asian Ecumenical Fellowship (AEF)

The AEF, a residential programme is designed to assist research scholars, ecumenists, activists, theologians and ecumenical practitioners from churches, ecumenical organisations and institutions hailing from a wide range of disciplines and sectors. Asian Ecumenical Fellows are given opportunities to avail the facilities and resources at the CCA headquarters for their study, research, and reflections. Rev. Prince Devanandan of the Methodist Church in New Zealand spent a month in Chiang Mai as part of his Sabbatical (16 January – 16 February 2019). Mr. Levi Vasconcelos Pinto of Igreja Protestante iha Timor Lorosa'e also availed the AEF and spent time at CCA Headquarters for his research related to decolonisation of East Timor and ecumenical solidarity during the struggle of the people for East Timor's independence (14 May–1 June 2019).

Ecumenical Enablers' Training in Asia (EETA)

13–15 May 2019 / Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The Ecumenical Enablers' Training in Asia for pastors and church leaders of the Churches in Cambodia was organised by the CCA in collaboration with the KCC on the theme "Our Servanthood and Accompaniment with the People of Cambodia". It was held at the KCC headquarters in Phnom Penh from 13 to 15 May 2019. Training programmes for pastors and leaders from local congregations have been organised by CCA in Cambodia annually since 2015.

The purpose of the training was to promote ecumenical theological education

and leadership development in Cambodia. It aimed at providing theological vision for the churches and younger generation of the church leaders and to encourage and strengthen churches to be in solidarity with the broken and vulnerable communities.

The programme was attended by 43 participants from local congregations of Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Independent, Pentecostal and Protestant Churches hailing from eight provinces of Cambodia: Battambang, Banteaymeanchey, Kampong Spue, Kampot, Kandal, Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Svayrieng.

The training programme consisted of various sessions addressing different perspectives on the main themes with focus on Biblical and Theological basis of Servanthood; Participating in God's mission as servants; Emerging challenges and concerns in Cambodia and Christian response; Being the Church in solidarity with the broken communities in Cambodia; Building peaceful communities in Cambodia as God's Mission; and Servanthood in God's mission of healing the wounded and vulnerable people. Together with a three-member CCA staff team, the training was facilitated by Rev. Sok Nev, Rev. Thath Pheakdey, and Serey Vuthy Keo.

Rev. Sok Nev, an ecumenically trained young leader stated, "Churches in Cambodia have gone through a hard plight in the past and nowadays we witness enormous growth of Christian community in Cambodia. However, it is also true that our churches are fragmented and divided. Lack of unity within the Christian community is a challenge we are facing in our churches." Rev. Sok Nev translated the Mission Statement of the CCA which was adopted in Yangon in 2017 into the Khmer language

and this was distributed to all participants.

"We have been taking the support we have received from foreign missionaries in the past decades for granted. It is now time to equip our capacities and propagate the message of the gospel by ourselves, and not be dependent on others," added Rev. Chann Sok, a pastor from Siem Reap's rural congregation.

Rev. Grace Moon, Programme Coordinator of CCA reminded the participants, "We know well what trials the churches in Cambodia have had to undergo in the past. When you have long terms of war, isolation, poverty, trauma, and marginalization, our Lord God also suffers with your people and hears your cries. Now, it is God's call to the churches in Cambodia to stand up together hand in hand, to strengthen your ecumenical spirit of unity and to serve the people who are wounded and marginalized."

The biblical and theological basis of servanthood leading to transformation towards societies and communities with its theological vision being based on the Asia Mission Statement was presented. In presenting its liberative aspect, Rev. Dr. Ngur Liana of CCA said, "Poverty, injustice, and inequality are all man-made problems, and must be overcome by an act of justice that comes from God through the transforming Gospel." He added, "As we are God's chosen people and called to serve the people, we are the agents of witnessing the Gospel, and transforming the wounded community to the fullness of life where peace with justice prevails."

Rev. Dr. Chuleepran, a Programme Consultant of CCA, spoke on the topic "Our Servanthood for Reconciliation and Healing: Pastoral Ministry of Churches as Caregiv-

ers", and encouraged the participants to be servants of God's reconciliation and healing in the wounded societies and communities in Cambodia. She highlighted the importance of churches' role to affirm the servanthood as caregivers and healers and to be in solidarity with the broken and divided communities.

Rev. Thath Phaekdey, the resource person from Cambodia, discussing the role of the Churches in Cambodia towards serving the broken and vulnerable communities, focused on the ministry of Churches in the midst of the lingering issues such as poverty, lack of pure water, deforestation, drug trafficking and abuse, LGBTQ issues, and human trafficking. He admitted that "The involvement of the Church has been inadequate until today," and added that "The Church needs to find local resources to work and move forward."

A young participant of the training, Sem Srey Srose from Battambang remarked at the end of the session that, "Although we are the youngest among the participants, we think we are eligible to be part of this training since we are youth leaders and all serving our churches as Sunday school teachers. I am very happy to attend this training, especially learning a new way of reading and interpreting the Bible in our local context".

The participants recognised the increasing need for constant accompaniment of the CCA with the people and churches in Cambodia, and they sought increased support in the form of ecumenical accompaniment as a priority in the future. A follow-up programme is indeed necessary for the establishment of the future of the ecumenical movement in Cambodia. One of the Church leaders, Mr. Oungchay Soklay, the President of the Cambodia Business Asso-

ciation, stated, "Churches in Cambodia are being controlled by foreign missions. This has been weakening the unity of the existing Churches. Cambodian Churches need to take more steps towards the ecumenical movement for the unity of the Church in the future and develop ecumenism to break out of the existing denominations. We need to take a new step towards the unity of the churches in Cambodia for ecumenism."

Asia Sunday 2019

2 June 2019

The theme of the Asia Sunday-2019 was "Stateless and Trafficked People: Our Co-Pilgrims". Member churches and councils of the CCA in different parts of Asia observed the Asia Sunday on 2 June 2019.

Asia Sunday is observed every year on the Sunday before Pentecost, which coincides with the official inauguration of the CCA. Asia Sunday observance focuses on a particular theme every year and reminds member churches and councils, as well as other partner churches and ecumenical organisations around the world to reflect on a specific Asian issue/theme.

A four-member staff team led by the General Secretary of CCA, Dr. Mathews George Chunakara participated in the special ecumenical service organised by the churches in Taiwan for the Asia Sunday observance on 2 June. The service was held at the Che-Lam (Chi-Nan) Presbyterian Church in Taipei city.

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara delivered the sermon based on the biblical texts Leviticus 19:34, Exodus 23:9 and Ephesians 2:19, and highlighted the various aspects in relation to the contexts of the stateless

and trafficked people who are forced to live as strangers and aliens in every situation. While illustrating the situation of statelessness and human trafficking in the present context, Dr. Mathews George Chunakara foregrounded the following:

- The stateless and trafficked people who are forced to be in our midst are aliens as they are not considered natives even in their original land, but are treated as strangers. We know the feelings of an alien who stands in front of us as a stranger.
- Statelessness and human trafficking are often intertwined and are grave and widespread human rights problems in the contemporary world. Both issues have even been linked through the common claim that statelessness puts a person at greater risk of becoming a victim of trafficking.
- Millions of Asians, including women and children, are at risk of being stateless and trafficked as migrant workers both within and outside the region. Stateless persons who are not recognised as nationals by any state have no nationality or citizenship and they live in vulnerable situations.
- As stateless people living in particular geographical areas are not protected by any national legislation, the consequences of their situations of statelessness are profound. Statelessness affects all aspects of life and is a massive problem for the twelve million stateless people located in different parts of the world. These people became stateless due to various circumstances, mostly as a result of the denial of citizenship.
- The persecution of ethnic minorities

and discrimination of indigenous people and other vulnerable groups exists. There are also individuals who become stateless due to personal circumstances and ethnic, religious or political reasons due to which they flee to neighbouring countries.

- Stateless people exist in most Asian countries. 40% of the identified stateless population of the world lives in Asia and the Pacific.
- Today, trafficking in persons thrives as modern-day slavery. There are nearly 36 million victims of human trafficking worldwide, of which 23.5 million, nearly two-thirds, are from Asia.
- As the consequences and impacts of statelessness and human trafficking are enormous, the Christian response warrants that we address this menace as an urgent priority. As the human family that is intimately connected and interdependent, it is important to care for migrants, trafficked, and stateless.
- There are numerous issues linked to the movement of people within and beyond borders, especially the rampant rise of inequality, ethnocentrism, racism, violence and extreme nationalism. All these dehumanising factors are visible, evident, and happening in our midst today, and are degrading the image of God and the basic dignity deserved by every human being created in the image of God.

The Asia Sunday service was led by Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) General Secretary Rev. Lyim Hong-Tiong, Che-Lam Church senior pastor Rev. Huang Chun-Sheng and PCT Ecumenical Relations Secretary Rev. Lian Chin-Siong.

Churches in South Korea observed Asia Sunday on 16 June 2019 at Gwanghyun Methodist Church. The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) coordinated and organised a special Asia Sunday service. The NCCCK translated the liturgy of Asia Sunday in Korean language and distributed it to all member churches and Christian organisations in Korea. The Asia Sunday service was conducted by Rev. Kyrie Kim, Chairperson of CCA Programme Committee and the sermon was delivered by Rev. Dr. Ahn Jae-woong, a former General Secretary of CCA. In his sermon, Rev. Dr. Ahn stated, "The issues of statelessness and human trafficking are not just one of the news in other foreign nations. Their pain and tears are our pain and tears, and we should embrace our sisters and brothers in the margins of our society with the love of Jesus Christ who said 'love your neighbours as yourself'. It is so relevant that CCA is focusing on the theme of stateless and trafficked people in Asia on Asia Sunday. Let us pray and join hands to advocate for the rights of the stateless and victims of human trafficking."

AEWA Preparatory Meeting and Staff Visit to Taiwan

1–5 June 2019, Taiwan

A four-member CCA staff team led by the General Secretary visited Taiwan from 1–5 June, 2019. The General Secretary was accompanied during the visit by programme coordinators Rev. Jung Eun Moon, Dr. Ronald Lalthanmawia, and Rosiana Purnomo. The delegation had detailed discussions with the local host committees about the preparations for the forthcoming AEWA of CCA.

The CCA delegation also met with heads of CCA member churches and the national council of churches, and had dialogues on changing ecumenical and ecclesiastical landscapes in Taiwan and other parts of Asia.

The delegation also engaged in discussions with member churches about Taiwanese churches' ministry among the migrants and indigenous people, social development, and diaconal ministries of churches, interreligious dialogue and religious freedom, as well as efforts for building peace and harmony among people and communities. Visit to a HIV/AIDS advocacy and shelter project was also part of the programme of the delegation.

Various meetings were held with the heads of member constituencies of CCA in Taiwan which included Rev. Lyim Hong-Tiong, General Secretary of the PCT; Rt. Rev. David J.H. Lai, the Primate of Taiwan Episcopal Church; Rev. Cornelius Liu, Executive Secretary of the Methodist Church in the Republic of China; and Fr. Otfried Chan President of the National Council of Churches in Taiwan, who is also Secretary General of Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference.

Youth Leadership Development Training in Cambodia

15-16 June 2019/Phnom Penh, Cambodia

A Youth Leadership Development Training programme was organised by CCA in collaboration with the KCC on the theme "Let there be no strife between you and me". The training was held at the KCC headquarters in Phnom Penh from 15-16 June 2019. Forty-five participants from five provinces of Cambodia Battambang, Kampong Spue, Kampot, Kandal, and Phnom Penh attend-

ed the training. The training focused on building the capacity of young people in Cambodia to become future ecumenical leaders and to help them rediscover their identity as young Christians in Cambodia's multi-religious context. The Christian young people in Cambodia brought vast opportunities as well as complex challenges especially in the Christian context.

Cambodia, a country that recovered from three decades of civil war and isolation is now undergoing rapid economic growth and with it, tremendous social changes. The challenges which young Cambodians face are overwhelming. More and more students leave school to find jobs to support their basic needs. They migrate to urban centres, exposing them to new risks and vulnerabilities. High-risk behaviour, especially among marginalized and vulnerable youth, is exposing young people to sexual reproductive health risks, HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence and drug abuse.

Several topics such as "Cambodia's National Youth Situation: Issues and Challenges," "Overcoming Challenges: Christian Youth Empowerment – faith, values & tradition," "Embracing Diversity: Servant Leadership and Other Leadership Concepts," and "Building a Just Society: Cambodia's Christian Youth Voices on Social Issues" were covered.

Rev. Sok Nev, an ecumenically trained young theologian from Cambodia stated that: "Such youth leadership development programme is very timely and relevant for the church youth of Cambodia as they are facing a lot of challenges especially in dealing with societal issues such as education and unemployment that leads them to have mental health issues." He hopes that after the training, it will give the par-

ticipants confidence and hope to keep continuing their work in the church while contributing to the Cambodian society as a whole.

The youth participants of CCA's and KCC's youth leadership development programme affirmed their integral role in the church and society. They recognised that their faith should be nurtured so that their vision of a vibrant and dynamic church would be realized. They affirmed that their dynamism as Christian youth will bring new perspectives and new ideas in building a brighter future not just for the church but for the society.

Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI)

1–30 July 2019 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

The AEI, an annual ecumenical formation and leadership development training programme, was held from 1–30 July 2019. Twenty-four participants selected from churches in nine countries and regions in Asia attended the month-long programme.

Focused on the theme, "Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Struggle for Peace with Justice in Asia," AEI 2019 aimed at training a new generation of young Asian ecumenical leaders, equipping and enabling them with the tools to productively contribute to the ecumenical movement. The course outline and contents of the programme were designed to help participants envision a wider ecumenism in the context of struggle for peace with justice.

AEI 2019 saw a diverse faculty line-up of renowned ecumenists, theologians, social workers, and academicians. They included Dr. Wesley S Ariarajah (Emeritus professor and former WCC Staff), Dr. Eh Tar Gay (Vice President of Myanmar Institute of Theol-

ogy), Rev. Dr. R. C. Thomas (Professor of Systemic Theology at the Believers Church Seminary), Rev. Dr. Binsar Pakpahan (Lecturer at Jakarta Theological Seminary), Rev. Dr. Pradit Takerngrangsarit (former President and Dean of McGilvary College of Divinity), Dr. Saw Alwyn (Dean of Kaw Thoo Lai Karen Baptist Bible School), Dr. Le Ngoc Bich Ly (Professor at Institute of Religion, Culture, and Peace), Ven. Dr. Phramaha Boonchuay Doojai (Mahachulalongkorn Rajavidyalaya University), Mr. Jervas Musau (UN High Commissioner for Refugees), Ms. Heather Jameson and Ms. La Aw (Consultants at International Justice Mission). The in-house members of the teaching faculty included CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, Rev. Dr. Chuleepran Srisoontorn, Rev. Jung Eun Moon, Dr. Reynaldo Ty, Rev. Dr. Ngurliana, Dr. Ronald Lalthanmawia, and Ms. Roslana Purnomo.

The training helped the participants to engage themselves in a wide range of activities, presentations, panels, and thematic discussions. They also immersed themselves in grassroots exposure visits, self-guided study, daily devotion, group presentations, and preparation of special assignments.

As part of the exposure visits, the AEI participants visited the Suan Dok Buddhist temple, at Mahachulalongkorn Rajavidyalaya University as well as the first church to be established in the city of Chiang Mai. For a session on "Interfaith Partnership in Building Harmonious Community", the participants entered a lively dialogue with Ven. Dr. Phramaha Boonchuay Doojai, followed by a "Monk Chat" session with young Buddhist novices and monks at Wat Suan Dok. This on-ground experience was yet another space for the AEI participants

to appreciate the uniqueness of Asia's religions.

An exposure trip was organised to Chiang Rai, Mae Sai, and Mae Ai districts, and to the Thai-Myanmar border. They visited the Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities Centre (DEPDC) for stateless and trafficked children and the Grace Home for children. In both places, they learnt of the struggles of stateless young people and the issues related to their legal identity. In a conversation with Fr. Sompop Jantraka, the founder of DEPDC, the participants were able to understand the pioneering work among children.

Rev. Romella Robinson, an ordained minister from Pakistan, shared her experience as an AEI participant saying, "I have learnt a lot from this course, particularly because of the informative and thought-provoking AEI syllabus. These issues need more consideration in my own context so that decision-making is done with an informed awareness. Peace and justice are not only a concern of human beings but entails all of creation. Re-reading the Bible with different lenses and perspectives challenged me to look differently at opinions I had formed so far within my culture, history, tradition, and values."

Stephannie Mayores, a participant from the Philippines drew an interesting analogy. She described the AEI as a "sacred space", where she shed "the sandals of pride and arrogance; the sandals of misconception, prejudice, and exclusiveness; and the sandals of ignorance, apathy and silence", which facilitated her moving even closer to God's truth of peace and justice. "I was moved to take off my sandals of merely remaining silent and apathetic to the struggles of my Asian people, and now

instead, I will put on the shoes of learning the art of being mindful and doing my best," she said.

Saurabh Khobragade, from the National Council of Churches in India, described the AEI as "yet another opportunity offered by the CCA for young ecumenical leaders to enhance their individual capacities and leadership qualities, which can aid in working effectively and progressively towards bringing more praxis-oriented changes in Asia".

The AEI equipped the participants with the necessary tools and theological anchoring to combat the issues faced in their local contexts, contributing greatly to their ecumenical formation. The participants have established peer-to-peer networks to learn, share, and collaborate meaningfully in the common pilgrimage of peace and justice.

Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly (AEWA)

21-27 November 2019 / Hsinchu, Taiwan

More than 250 representatives of churches/councils and ecumenical organisations/institutions from Asia gathered in Taiwan and became part of the first major ecumenical women's meet—the AEWA.

The AEWA was held in Hsinchu, Taiwan from 21–27 November 2019 on the theme, "Arise, be Awake to Reconcile, Renew and Restore the Creation". Hosted by the PCT, AEWA was Asia's first historic women's gathering of this scale in Asian ecumenical history which enabled the Asian Christian women to be prime partners in God's mission of healing the wounded and the broken world and to be catalysts of reconciliation, renewal and restoration of creation.

Archbishop Dr. Willem Simarmata, CCA Moderator in his inaugural address said, "I see the reality of our global Christianity, especially in Asia, that the churches have been transformed into 'churches of women'. The power of women is extraordinary in determining the future direction of Christianity."

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara the General Secretary of CCA in his introductory address said, "Improvements in the status of women are evident in different fields, and these transformations have been made possible by strengthened institutions and legal systems, demographic transitions, and a more dynamic civil society. However, we are on the trajectory towards a less inclusive and more unequal world."

While articulating the expected outcome of AEWA, and his vision to organise a major ecumenical women's assembly the CCA General Secretary stated that organising AEWA was not aimed at merely addressing gender representation within churches, but to reflect and strategize ways in which church and society can be further sensitised. He appealed to the participants of the ecumenical gathering saying, "It is our collective task to create conditions for identifying, motivating, building, and enabling a diverse range of women leaders to hone their talents and bear formidable challenges. To reconcile is to renew and restore relationships. AEWA offers the space to interpret the multiple meanings of the theme and apply them practically in our contemporary contexts".

Rev. Kyrie Kim, the Moderator of the CCA's Programme Committee, Rev. Lyim Hong-Tiong, the General Secretary of PCT, and Rev. Lien Chang-Mei, PCT's Programme Secretary and also the host convener, extended greetings at the opening session.

Rev. Dr. Henriette Hutabarat Lebang, Chairperson of the Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (PGI) and a former General Secretary of the CCA delivered a homily in the Opening Worship of AEWA based on the text Isaiah 32:9-20 in which she described the biblical text as a "disturbing call to repentance", stating that the complexity and interconnectedness of today's problems inherently affect everyone. Due to growing polarisation, competition, and pervasive individualism, the "whole creation is suffering due to the greed of a few people who exploit all others and nature beyond its limit" she added. "In this Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly, we are called by the prophet Isaiah to pause for a while, to look at the face of our world today, the suffering of many people due to injustices," said Dr. Lebang to the participants.

A young Taiwanese indigenous woman theologian Vavauni Ljaljegean delivered the first thematic presentation on "Arise, Be Awake to Reconcile, Renew, and Restore the Creation". She illustrated parallels from the story of the "voiceless Tamar in her suffering" and the suffering of indigenous women in Taiwan. "Like Tamar, a young lady who had suffered from the loss of dignity, Taiwanese indigenous women suffer. No one hears their crying; even their closest brothers and family wouldn't hear their cries and voices." These indigenous women are actually marginalized even in their families. There is no one caring for their suffering," thus narrated the forthright woman theologian about the ongoing injustice faced by the Taiwanese indigenous people. Explaining the systemic and systematic oppression of the indigenous people, Vavauni also visualized the daily realities many indigenous women face as victims of trafficking and forced pros-

titution. "Indigenous women experience 'strongly doubled marginalization' and 'collective stigmatisation'. Their inherent gender coupled with male chauvinism and outmoded philosophies relegates them as the silent minority," she pinpointed, and implored participants asking, "Where is the voice of Taiwan Indigenous girls on this journey of justice? Where is their crying in the miserable history of my people? Their voices are still unheard, but their crying is clear to my ears." According to Vavauni, the aim of reconciliation was to reveal the truth which was covered and obscured, to heal those who suffer from the realities of injustice, and to transform those wounded to be recovered in the love of Christ. "Therefore, without truth, there is no true reconciliation; without justice, there is no reconciliation," affirmed Vavauni.

Dr. Sawako Fujiwara, a feminist theologian from the National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ), spoke on the sub-theme "Be Awake to Reconcile". "Reconciliation has to be understood not just as a biblical-traditional category of ecclesial discourse, but as a principle that guides Christian life and service. Thus, the brokenness of our communities needs to be discerned and tirelessly addressed by women," said Dr. Sawako Fujiwara. She called upon the participants to be agents of reconciliation: to reconcile with their sisters first, then to share what they witness with their brothers, and finally be catalysts for the reconciliation of the whole community. "We need to ensure the safety and security of all in our communities, and realize the full participation of all, regardless of gender or sexual identity. We need to properly focus attention on transwomen who too often remain ignored in our society, knowingly or unknowingly."

Delivering an address on the sub-theme "Be Awake to Renew", Dr. Deidre Palmer, President of the Uniting Church in Australia said, "Many of our churches are inclusive in their theology and approaches to ministry but there are still sisters in Christ, those in other religious communities, and the wider society who experience discrimination." In her presentation, she reminded all churchwomen of their call, which was to stand in solidarity with all women, advocating for equality and justice for them, and contributing to the renewal not only of our churches but our world and the whole creation.

Dr. Deidre Palmer elaborated upon the need for renewal of the participation of women as disciples, apostles, and leaders in the Church, which had been present in the Jesus movement and the early years of Christianity. She emphasized that renewal emerged in the partnership of women and men, and that being awake to renewal included listening deeply to one another. She spoke of the significance of an inter-generational community where the young and the old were a source of nurture and encouragement to each other.

Rev. Irene Umbu Lolo, a young woman theologian from Indonesia's far-flung and remote Sumba region, delivered the fourth thematic presentation on the fourth day of AEWA. She spoke on the sub-theme "Be Awake to Restore". She drew parallels between the experiences of women weavers in her native Sumba and the restorative actions of God. "The patriarchal social and cultural systems put men in primary positions with special rights as owners and leaders, while women are categorised as second-class citizens and their lives are controlled by men. However, Sumba's women weavers respond to violence

with non-violence and resist in a conciliatory manner. They have proved that they are problem-solvers and peacemakers," explained Rev Irene. In her presentation, Rev Irene elucidated the symbolism and meaning of weaving as a restorative process. "For Sumba, weaving is the process which entails empowering those who are part of it to restore their communities, restore nature, and restore their own inner peace." The act of collective creation, she said, was vital to the process of peaceful restoration.

In the panel presentations on "Towards Caring and Sustaining the Creation", Ester Damaris Wolla Wunga from Indonesia, in a powerful and moving presentation, expounded on the life and position of women in her region Sumba, and the conditions that pushed many into a life of hardship and misery. "Women are the most vulnerable to discrimination, violence, and exploitation in Sumba," she said. She also called on the church to break its silence and emphasized the importance of education in empowering women to say 'No!' to violence in all its forms, in fighting an oppressive culture, and in being able to speak for themselves.

Suganthenee Niles from Sri Lanka gave a compelling presentation on the threats and problems plaguing the environment in the 21st century, and she reiterated that humans had a God-given responsibility to be caretakers of the creation and not destroyers.

Lending a unique Buddhist perspective on the theme, Venerable Jeungmoon, a South Korean Buddhist nun spoke of the need to find, reconcile, and redefine the true potential of the self as creation; this was essential in order to understand the creation around us better. The young Buddhist nun

from the Mahayana tradition provided an interesting analogy of a rainbow to understand the self, wherein the combination of seven colours created a beautiful phenomenon because each component possessed its own individuality.

Rev. Dr. Jeaneth H. Faller from the Philippines affirmed, "To sustain God's creation, we go beyond merely protecting the physical environment. More importantly, we need to aim at creating a human ecology which makes the existence of every creature more dignified, protecting the radical good of life in all its manifestations, and preparing for future generations and environments that are closer to that which God planned." She also spoke about the painfully arrogant and human-centric perspective of people that had led to the degeneration of creation and the disruption of the Circle of Life.

The second panel presentation of the AEWA brought various perspectives from four major faiths in Asia – Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity. In a panel focusing on "Towards Nurturing Spirituality and Wholeness of Life", the four panellists drew from the ethos and values of their respective religious traditions and expressed valuable insights.

Dr. Dewi Candraningrum, an Islamic theological scholar, shared reflections as a feminist Muslim woman theologian. "Feminist spirituality is a grassroots religious movement inside and outside established religion that reclaims power, value, and dignity of women who strive for equality. It is a commitment to bringing about in oneself and in the world an alternative vision of justice and equality for all." Dr. Dewi explained that a personal spiritual quest was empowering, love-centred, and lay at the heart of human transformation. Accord-

ing to Dr. Dewi, personal transformation helped in healing collective trauma, and an inward spiritual transformation was a means of reclaiming one's identity.

Sr. Elaine Seow, a Roman Catholic nun from *Verbum Dei*, shared her insights in a series of delightful anecdotes. "The impulse to nurture one's spirituality stems from the human existential need for 'something more', from the longing for something transcendental. In this process, the transformation of the self leads to the transformation of the community." Sr. Elaine noted that reconciliation, renewal, and restoration were stages in achieving higher levels of spirituality, with each stage necessitating one to courageously allow more of God's love to transform oneself. It is in this manner that one feels ultimately fulfilled.

Ranjini Sampath, a Hindu spiritual practitioner and human rights activist, defined spirituality as the state or quality of being concerned with one's human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things. "The hallmark of a spiritual person is someone whose highest priority is to be loving to the self and others. A spiritual person cares not just for fellow human beings, but for the whole creation. A spiritual person knows that we are all one, and consciously attempts to honour this oneness," she said. Ranjini Sampath explained that spirituality was to be nurtured and cared for so that an unbreakable bond is formed between the heart and the mind. Once an internal harmony is secured, one can then extend compassion and care to the rest of creation.

Venerable Prof. Shih Chao-hwei, a Taiwanese Buddhist nun presented the value of Buddhist spirituality. According to Buddhism, the aim of nurturing spirituality was to eliminate suffering and attain

happiness. Objectivity and detachment as necessary tools in securing the wholeness of life. Though paradoxical, she explained that "meditation offered the perfect space for demonstrating objectivity and detachment coupled with an extremely high sense of perception and self-awareness".

Analysing and presenting their respective Asian contexts of struggle for peace with justice and women's participation, four panellists stressed the need for collective engagement in advocacy in the session on "Towards Participation and Solidarity in Struggle for Peace with Justice". Helen Grace Salatandre Paris from the United Church of Christ in the Philippines emphasized the need for Asian women to "develop own remedies for conflict management and resolution to pursue justice, contain conflict and replace violence and war with peaceful and effective means to address injustices and resolve disputes". She reiterated that solidarity required that people think and act in terms of the obligations as members of a global community, despite differences of race, religion, or nationality.

Rev. Hemalatha John from the CSI based her presentation on the re-reading of the Scripture from a womanist perspective to reveal the role of women and men in violence and peace. "The need of the hour today is the discerning ability of the Wise Woman as in the book of II Samuel. We live in a world filled with war and conflicts; women from every city must take courage to initiate and participate in conversations during antagonizing situations and people", Rev. Hemalatha told the participants.

Focusing on women in labour migration and the multi-layer struggles of migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, Yusmiati Vistamika Wangka, who works among migrant women workers in Hong Kong shed

light on the struggles of migrant workers as well as the factors that affect the feminization of migration to Hong Kong. Touching on the role of the Church in this matter, Yusmiati encouraged churches to raise awareness about migrant workers issues and disseminate information about safe migration and the risk of human trafficking.

The last panel session of the AEWA was on the topic "Towards ensuring an inclusive leadership in Church and Society", in which examples and experiences of women in leadership from different Asian contexts were shared.

Rev. Dr. Eun Ha Kim from Korea took the participants through the history of Asian women's participation in the ecumenical movement and called for new strategies for women leadership to emerge in church and society.

Rev. Romella Robinson from Pakistan shared a moving testimony on the many challenges of Christian women in her country. She shared the experiences from her own denomination. Although women were ordained, they were asked to "stay silent as much as possible", and their gifts were limited to volunteer work.

Wellorich Anderson Sokhlet from India said that much progress had been made in the context of increased women's participation in her church. However, she noted that male leadership always had the final say, even if women were empowered to make decisions. Despite her community being matrilineal, she said that patriarchal customs had crept into church practice. Her church had seen the decades-long struggle for the ordination of women, and she hoped to see that change in the near future. She said, "As women, we must

voice out our support for each other, and not criticize and bring down anyone. We must seek first the kingdom of God – righteousness and inclusivity will then follow."

An open dialogue with officers of various women's organisations took place during a session on "Towards Revitalising Ecumenical Movement and the Role of Asian Ecumenical Women's Organisations". Panellists representing various ecumenical organisations shared unique roles and contributions of respective women's organisations within Asia's ecumenical journey, and unanimously agreed on the pressing need for collaboration and joint action. The respondents opined that more concerted efforts of collaborations and cooperation among Asian Christian women's organisations need to be ensured by those who were in the leadership of their respective organisations in order to avoid competition among Asian women's organisations.

Supaporn Yarnasarn President of the ACWC talked about how the ACWC had been a space for Asian women ever since it was started six decades ago. The organisation was marked by its work beyond the barriers and binaries of women and men, poor and rich, and racial or cultural differences.

Nirmala Gurung from the World Young Women's Christian Association delivered a stirring presentation. "We believe that when women rise to leadership, they transform power structures and policies around human rights, gender equality, peace, and justice. When women lead, they are empowered to address global agendas of sustainable development," she said.

Dr. Liza B. Lamis, Executive Secretary of

the ICFLC spoke of her own passion for working with women, who, in transforming themselves, transform the world. Rev. Moumita Biswas from the World Day of Prayer drew AEWA's attention back to the transformative power of the simple prayer and women's participation and leadership in the prayer movement.

Some participants voiced their thoughts after listening to the presentations. Elizabeth Tapia, who was the first women's secretary of the CCA, and who was active in building up the Asian ecumenical women's movement starting from the 1970s, asked if there were common concerns that could be dealt with, and suggested merging "efforts, resources, and voices" towards a common goal.

Emma Alamin Cantor from the Philippines vehemently argued for the need for networking and collaboration among such ecumenical organisations in today's times, given that the issues which plague the developing world almost always disproportionately affect women. She also emphasized the need for accompanying young people on the common ecumenical journey. Clerisa Varghese from the Indian Orthodox Church said that ecumenism was effected into action at individual levels. AEWA, she said, planted the thought; it was up to the participants to actualize it.

Rev. Kyung In Kim from the Presbyterian Church in Korea commented that "An immediate area of attention of all regional ecumenical women's organisations in Asia was strengthening and revitalising the Asian ecumenical movement by utilising all means in a collective manner." She also said that they had to concentrate the limited financial and human resources at their disposal, strengthen their ecumenical partnership in order to strengthen the

ecumenical action of Asian Christian women, and avoid further fragmentation of the ecumenical movement.

Aside from thematic and panel presentations, three workshop sessions were conducted to facilitate dialogue among Asian women on specific concerns and issues. The concerns and issues addressed in the workshops included: spirituality and wisdom of Asian women, eco feminism and climate change, women in church ministry, migration and trafficking of women in Asia, interfaith marriages, society and culture, poverty and hunger, reconstruction of women's bodies, resisting patriarchy and family values, health and wholeness of life, also objectification, sexualization, and commodification of women.

The homily at the closing worship was delivered by the Vice Moderator of the PCT, Rev. Abus Takisvilainan, the first female vice moderator of PCT. Rev. Abus encouraged participants to have perseverance and renewed faith in God in pursuit of their tasks and goals. She also appreciated the CCA for bringing together a diverse group of intergenerational women to discuss the pressing concerns of the time. Rev. Abus also encouraged the participants to learn about the differences among people to respect and celebrate their diversities, but never to rebuke or discriminate against them.

Bishop Genieve Blackwell of the Anglican Church of Australia led an ecumenical Holy Eucharistic Service with the assistance of a group of intergenerational women representatives from various churches across Asia.

At the conclusion of the Assembly, participants adopted a *Communique* affirming the need to stand together in solidarity

towards realizing justice and peace at this Kairos moment of their planet earth, and that they were with one voice in asserting 'NO' to a culture of violence and exploitation of earth's resources. The Communique stated that humanity is in a critical time when the whole of God's creation is groaning due to irresponsible human action, greed and continuing discrimination, violence and exploitation of women and children. Without repenting from the sin of greed, and without reconciling and doing justice to God's creation, women and the marginalized communities, in particular, the world will not experience justice and peace.

The Assembly called all the participants to rise up and nurture their roles for the liberation of the whole creation and to commit themselves to work together for upholding the rights and dignity of all women; initiate common actions to strengthen the ecumenical movement, avoid fragmentation of the women's movement, and duplication of programmes and action within the ecumenical family as they need to work together for the common goal of supporting and accompanying women in Asia.

3.

BUILDING PEACE AND MOVING BEYOND CONFLICTS

Objectives

- To analyse the context of conflicts and develop methodologies of churches' participation in peacebuilding; and,
- To assist churches in their initiatives in responding to conflict situations and raise awareness through interreligious platforms to contribute and sustain peaceful societies.

Pilgrimage Team Visits in Asia

Under the theme of “Building Peace and Human Dignity”, the Asia focus of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PIP) programme of the WCC held its international reference group meeting at the headquarters of CCA in Chiang Mai from 4–8 March 2019. As a prelude to the PIP reference group meeting, five Pilgrimage Team Visits were organised jointly by WCC and CCA, and CCA facilitated organising those visits in collaborations with respective National Councils of Churches in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. In order to organise the Pilgrimage team Visit’s (PTV) a planning and preparatory meeting of NCC General Secretaries from these countries was organised and facilitated by CCA which was held at CCA headquarters in 2018 itself.

Pilgrimage Team Visit to Myanmar-Thai Border

27 February – 3 March 2019 / Mae Sot, Thailand

The PTV to the Myanmar-Thai border was directly facilitated and hosted by CCA which was held from 27 February – 3 March 2019.

The focus of the PTV to the Myanmar-Thai border was on refugees, stateless people, and victims of human trafficking; most of whom are the Karen people from Myanmar. The visit included meetings with migrants from Myanmar who have been trafficked to or have escaped to the border areas of Thailand and Myanmar, and are housed at refugee camps on the border, and undocumented migrant workers. The team also visited the community care centre, the medical clinic, and the refugee Bible schools.

While the key objective of the PTV to the border was to express solidarity with the affected persons and affirming an ecumenical commitment to them, it was translated into key outputs in the form of contextual analyses for the reference group of the PIP, and proposals of concrete actions to strengthen the diaconal capacities of the churches to serve those in need. Doing so has put this conflict area on the global map, and has brought global attention to the vulnerable persons and their decades-long suffering.

What was most commended by the participants were the gifts of faith and hope that the Karen people celebrated. They demonstrated an innate motivation to resist the difficult circumstances they were forced into. They celebrated their identity and history, reclaiming it through their educational discourse and cultural symbolism. This was despite the wounds they face – namely, the discrimination of their children, the trans-generational trauma, the constant threat of camp closures, and the reproduction of domestic and sexual violence. Their stories, of course, remain massively complex.

Thirteen members of WCC PIP reference group, together with Rev. Grace Moon, Dr. Reynaldo Ty, and Ms. Patchayotai Boontama from CCA, participated in PTV. Rev. Grace Moon and Dr. Reynaldo Ty were responsible for coordinating and facilitating the PTV to the Myanmar- Thailand border.

Staff visit to Bahrain to learn about Asian Diaspora.

3–7 May 2019 / Bahrain

As a follow-up to the 2018 Asia Regional Consultation on “Migration, Trafficking in Persons, and the Asian Diaspora” in Bang-

kok, Thailand, the representatives of Asian Diaspora in Bahrain organised meetings for CCA representatives to meet with Asian Diaspora migrant workers, church leaders, laity, community service providers, prominent Muslim scholars, and interfaith organisations in the Kingdom of Bahrain in May 2019. This was part of the CCA's efforts to accompany the churches and migrant workers in the Gulf region by developing and nurturing relationships among Asian Diaspora churches and organisations.

The individuals and organisations whom CCA met in Bahrain included the following: migrant workers in labour camps; Mr. So-man Baby (Bahrain representative of the CCA ad-hoc task force on Asian Diaspora in the Arabian Gulf); Mr. Yusuf 'Joe' Haeder and his wife Laila Haeder (the oldest living Bahraini Christians); pastors of the member organisations of the National Evangelical Church of Bahrain; the Bible Society in the Gulf, Bahrain; the Marthoma Church; YMCA's Bahrain leadership; Ms. Marietta Das (from the Migrant Workers Protection Society) and Dr. John Phillip (the General Secretary of Bahrain's Indian Community Relief Fund); Ms. Faten Sabri (an author and Islamic studies expert); and H.E. Dr. Shaikh Khalid bin Khalifa al Khalifa (Chair of the Board of Trustees of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence).

The CCA affirmed its intentions to support the Asian Diaspora Regional Council (ADRC) for the benefit of migrant labourers and interfaith harmony in Bahrain. The resounding feedback received was that it would be beneficial to have some kind of 'CCA banner' under which individuals could work under the ADRC. The fear was that without the legitimacy and validation of a renowned organisation, the ADRC and its work may not be recognised under

the proposed Council. The outcome of all discussions and deliberations was that it would be better to commence a CCA chapter in each Gulf state, where concerted efforts could then come to fruition under the ADRC. All persons met with echoed the immediate necessity of this overarching organisation and unity of efforts for diaspora welfare throughout the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Solidarity Visit to Rohingya Refugee Camp

7-8 October 2019 / Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

The solidarity visit of the CCA General Secretary to Myanmar's Rohingya ethnic minority refugee camps in Bangladesh was made as a part of the CCA's commitment to accompany people and communities in vulnerable situations.

Accompanied by CCA Treasurer Augustine Deepak Karmakar and the General Secretary of the NCCB Rev. David Deepak Doss, the CCA General Secretary's visit was facilitated by the NCCB and the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), a leading development and humanitarian aid NGO initiated by the WCC almost five decades ago.

The CCDB facilitates 'Child Friendly Space' within the camp and also provides assistance with solar energy-powered electricity and pumps for drinking water facilities within the camps. The social workers of the CCDB who assist the people in the camp explained the deplorable conditions of the refugees. They reported the official statistics by government agencies that at least 60 children were born every day in the

camps. They also said that the heavy monsoon rain triggered landslides and floods in most of the 32 refugee camps and that this was a common scenario. Under these circumstances, children were especially vulnerable to water-borne diseases.

More than a million Rohingya ethnic people, a majority of who are Muslims, had to flee Myanmar around two years ago, following the ethnic conflicts that erupted in Myanmar's Rakhine state. The coordinated massacre of the Rohingya carried out by the military and the anti-Rohingya militants was classified by the UN as genocide, in which a large number of people were tortured, raped, and murdered; their houses burnt, and their livelihoods destroyed. The ethnic minority's rights to marriage, education, health care, free mobility, and employment were severely restricted. Many were coerced into labour and had their land seized arbitrarily; they were forced to live in extreme poverty. The Rohingya refugee crisis is one of the world's most devastating humanitarian disasters.

The Bangladeshi government officials have repeatedly stated that Bangladesh, the world's most densely populated country, does not have the capacity to accommodate the influx of the large number of Rohingyas. The Bangladesh government feels it is not obliged to host these refugees indefinitely, and the country is not even a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.

The President of the NCCB Joyantha Adhikari and the General Secretary Rev. David Deepak Doss have urged the churches in Asia to be mindful of the plight of the Rohingyas and their miserable living conditions in Bangladesh's refugee camps.

"The plight of more than a million refugees driven out from their homes in the Rakhine State in Myanmar and who are now forced to live in inhuman conditions in refugee camps in Bangladesh reflects the world's failure to prevent a humanitarian crisis," the CCA General Secretary stated.

The Ninth Global Energy Parliament

5 November 2019 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

The ninth Global Energy Parliament (GEP) focused on the theme "Living in Harmony with Nature", was held at the Payap University Campus in Chiang Mai, Thailand on 5 November 2019 in conjunction with the opening of the Eco School organised by the CCA and WCC.

The GEP is a global parliament of volunteers- a non-political, international body constituted by scientists, peace educators, environmentalists, researchers, philosophers, students, specialists from various fields, and dedicated citizens in search of practical and innovative solutions for the formidable challenges of the world.

Following the formal inauguration of the GEP with the lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries present, the televised inaugural address was delivered by Deputy Minister for External and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India, V. Muraleedharan.

Congratulating the GEP and its founder His Holiness Jagadguru Swami Isa, Minister Muraleedharan pointed out that the theme of the ninth GEP, "Living in harmony with nature", was very apt given the challenges of climate change and natural disasters that have plagued the recent history of this planet. He added that the root cause for all of this was the disharmony of

our living.

The imbalance in nature had been caused by the greed of human beings, the Minister rued, and so the theme of the 9th GEP was indeed timely, and he hoped that practical solutions and a plan of action would spring forth from this Parliament.

Highlighting what the GEP had achieved in its short history since 2003, Dr. C.V. Anand Bose, President/Speaker of the GEP, lauded the GEP for having provided a platform and a converging point for transforming the ugliness of this world to create a “terrible beauty” born out of such a convergence. Dr. Bose cited the Biblical example of Joseph and his foresight in advising Pharaoh to build a buffer stock during times of prosperity to tide over times of penury. He explained that the same kind of wisdom and foresight was needed to develop practical strategies in times of prosperity to prepare for the imminent times of penury.

In a special message delivered by the founder of the GEP Jagadguru Swami Isa stated, “All forms of life are closely bound with nature, for there is no life without nature and no nature without life. The human is considered the consumer and nature the product to be exploited, abused, and used in diverse ways with a reckless mentality. Modern educational systems have endowed the human with the perspective that every living and non living object around humans are created to be of service only to humans, but these concepts have to be changed for developing a culture of living in harmony with nature.”

Welcoming the members of the Parliament, observers, and dignitaries from all over the world, General Secretary of CCA Dr. Mathews George Chunakara pointed out that the GEP provided an opportunity

to understand the GEP’s philosophy, ethos, and values, and that the CCA was happy to host this parliament in Chiang Mai.

Mathews George Chunakara added that the affirmation of the GEP that “all human beings belong to one Earth, one Water, one Fire, one Air, and one Space”, and, “we are all global citizens sharing a common future”, captures the essence of true ecumenism. The unity of the *oikos*, irrespective of race, class, caste, creed, colour, or gender, should be the common goal for our shared future. However, he pointed out, “This common future was endangered by many global challenges today, and we must address this together based on common values and as global citizens.”

The Parliament deliberated and voted on bills related to interconnection and nature, youth involvement in climate justice, women’s contribution to ecological concerns, sustainable development, water justice, advocating for afforestation and promotion of self-sustained food patterns.

Eco school on Water, Food and Climate Justice

4–17 November 2019 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

The Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) of the WCC and the CCA organised the Eco School 2019. Held from 4–17 November 2019 at the headquarters of CCA in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the Eco School motivated and prepared young people to contribute to the work of the churches at the regional and local level on issues related to water, food, nutrition, health and climate change towards a sustainable future.

Twenty-eight youth participants attended the Eco School 2019, among whom were

16 women participants, 12 male participants. Participants hailed from Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia, and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, the General Secretary of the CCA, in his opening address said, "Only a world that is ecologically sustainable and economically and socially just can create harmonious coexistence amidst all of God's creation, and ensure new humanity. The Church and the ecumenical movement call for an ecumenical vision that will ensure and encourage all people of God to be partakers in God's mission towards reconciling, redeeming, and restoring the creation."

In an ecumenical milieu, the participants learnt about the local, regional, and international manifestations, causes, and impacts of the water crisis and food insecurity as a result of the climate crisis. They investigated the conditions and problems with which Asia is confronted from the viewpoints of ethics and faith as well as recommended ecumenical courses of action to respond to these challenges.

From their feedback, the participants learnt much in a span of 14 days. Among the new knowledge, the participants gained at this gathering were the following: interconnectedness of water, food, and climate change, all of which are a matter of justice; global view of environmental issues; eco feminism; eco politics; agroforestry; agro-farming; agrobiolgy; agrobiodiversity; water crisis and scarcity in the world today; food waste and starvation; eco-centric approaches on various issues; water diplomacy; the healing power of food; advocacy; ecumenism; youth empowerment; youth ecumenical movement; Blue Community; green and blue church; as well as Biblical-theological

reflections on water, food, and climate justice.

Among the new skills, attitudes and behaviour the participants acquired at the Eco School were the following: identifying environmental issues in their own contexts; community resource mapping; refraining from purchase and use of single-use bottled water; washing their own dishes to reduce the need for disposable plastic products and following this practice during church events; advocacy; proposal writing; making presentations; teamwork; sustainable development strategies, participation in discussions; planting trees as a way to save life on earth; effects of genetically modified organism food; bible study regarding environmental issues; understanding and developing green or blue church and sermons; presentation skills; the urgency of the need to take real action to work for water, food, and climate justice in the face of the power of the market forces globally.

New perspectives and values learnt at the Eco School included: justice; value of Mother Earth; justice perspective to climate change; sustainable development goals; stewardship of creation, knowing that our salvation as humankind is linked with the restoration and salvation of creation; respect for diversity; respect for cultural differences; not to judge people by what they eat; patience; acceptance, respect, and appreciation.

From an assessment of participants before they attended Eco School, most were not confident enough to take decisions and action to promote water, food, and climate justice and their levels ranged as follows: 3.6% very poor; 25% poor; 32.1% good; 25% very good; and 14.3% excellent. However, after participation in Eco School,

most feel they are able to make decisions, do things differently, and do things better in order to promote water, food, and climate justice as evident in their ratings: 39.3% excellent and 53.6% very good.

While at the headquarters of CCA, participants developed their action plans for implementation upon their return to their home countries. These volunteer community projects and follow-up work planned include the following: organic farming in the village and church; community gardening plot, donating harvest to the local food bank in order to provide sustainable nutritious food in order to stave off child and family poverty; tree planting; coastal tree planting; support local farmers by buying local fruits and vegetables; use eco bags; no single-use plastic; talk with local groups about how to deal with water pollution and food waste; waste segregation; work for a blue and green church; awareness building; awareness campaign about antibiotic resistance; local eco schools; bible studies; youth capacity-building and development; continuing their advocacy for environmental awareness, conservation, and protection in youth organisations inside the church and with the community, in general, supporting youth activism from local, national and international levels; strengthen the ecumenical work of church youth organisation; and "change myself and my family."

For their overall evaluation of the event, participants asserted that the training programme was well organised and instructors had vast knowledge on the subjects covered. Most participants unanimously affirmed they were "very enriched by this programme" and they "will share the knowledge with others." Participants agreed that the best aspects of the pro-

grammed were the theological basis for inputs and the experiential knowledge of the resource persons related to the theme." As a result of this gathering, participants were able to build social capital, as they had the opportunity to meet, interact, and link up with trusting members of social networks.

Dr. Reynaldo Ty, Programme Coordinator, CCA and Dinesh Suna, Coordinator of EWN of WCC coordinated the Eco School 2019.

Ecumenical Women's Action against Violence (EWAAV): Follow-up events of 2018 Regional EWAAV Consultation:

Cambodia

Sotheavy Srey from Cambodia, a participant of CCA's regional and national consultation shared that on 10 February 2019, she participated in a campaign called "One Billion Rising" to end violence against women and girls with the theme "We Rise from Campaign to a way of Life". She was also part of the group that created a press release on "Sexual Violence against Women and Children" on 5 March 2019 to celebrate International Women Day. The objectives were: to define sexual violence and media's contribution to the prevention of sexual violence; to encourage the media to stop blaming the victim and educate the masses on new trends of sexual violence through social media.

Pakistan

Nargus Azhar from Church of Pakistan, appreciated the CCA for the learning opportunity provided by the 2018 EWAAV consultation. Possessing a theological background and having served in a church with her husband, she organised seminars

and awareness programmes on the issues of violence against women. She initiated the “16 days of activism to End Violence against Women” campaign by educating young people in her church. She organised women leadership seminars and bible Studies sessions on women characters of Bible affirming the equality of women and men as created in the image of God.

India

Isam Raime from Presbyterian Church of India (PCI) had her first encounter with CCA at EWAAV consultation in 2018. She also attended the Human Trafficking consultation prior to EWAAV regional consultation. These issues were new and eye-opening for her. She shared her experience and learning with her Synod committee at PCI and they agreed to have a follow-up programme on Violence against Women involving other denominations and NCC India as well.

Seminar on Prevention Child Sexual Abuse

15 July 2019 / Lahore, Pakistan

As a follow-up of 2018 EWAAV Consultation, a seminar on the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse was organised by CCA jointly with St. Peter's Church, Lahore, Pakistan on 15 July 2019. The seminar was attended by 40 women who discussed the different forms of child sexual abuse, the psychological impacts of sexual abuse on children, and the legal frameworks in place to access justice. “Search for Justice,” a local child rights organisation, provided technical assistance.

The seminar was arranged given the alarming rise in child sexual abuse and murder, especially that of a girl child in

Pakistan's Punjab province. It was agreed that churches must realize the gravity of the issue, generate awareness among its congregations, and become a safe space for child victims of abuse.

Sunila Ammar, Coordinator of EWAAV and Ms. Rashada Qureshi from a child rights NGO in Pakistan facilitated different sessions on the prevalence and occurrence of child sexual abuse and biblical-theological discussions for affirming and preserving the dignity and rights of children.

Advocacy Training on Women's Rights

5 August 2019/ Raiwind, Pakistan

A one-day training programme on Women's Rights and Advocacy was organised by CCA and held in Raiwind, Pakistan as a follow-up of 2018 EWAAV initiative. The programme was jointly organised by CCA and the Church of Pakistan Raiwind Diocese.

Advocacy in Pakistan meant raising a voice for the fundamental rights of marginalized sections of Pakistani society, where women remain the most disadvantaged. The purpose of the training was to build awareness about rights among rural women and empower them to claim these constitutionally-guaranteed rights for their upliftment.

Contextual realities like female infanticide and violent crimes against women (honour killings and acid attacks) were highlighted under the matrix of the Pakistani patriarchal society. The restrictions on women's mobility and freedom to assembly that are further worsened by male surveillance and prevent women from opportunities of employment and empowerment were also elaborated. The discussions also

highlighted that male members often exert strict control over women's choice in marriage, education, and employment. Women often have little to no say in any decision-making. The programme stressed that it was within this context that advocacy needed to be generated.

South Asia Sub-Regional Consultation on EWAAP

10-13 October 2019 / Dhaka, Bangladesh

As part of emphasizing ecumenical women's action to end violence against women and engaging South Asian women in God's mission of reconciliation, renewal and restoration of its creation, CCA provided a platform for women in South Asia to deliberate on the emerging concerns hindering women's participation in God mission of reconciliation, renewal and restoration and strategize on actions that can bring change and transform the world into a place for all creation to live in harmony.

The sub-regional consultation held from 11 to 12 October 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh with a focus on the theme "Calling women of Asia; Arise, Be Awake to Reconcile, Renew and Restore the Creation" was organised in collaboration with NCCB. Twenty-five women from the sub-region participated.

Through workshops and sessions on various issues, participants analysed the regional and local contexts of women in South Asia regarding extreme violence against women, cultural barriers and discriminative practices hindering women's participation and leadership. They also discussed strategies and actions to enhance the capacity of church women leaders to advocate and campaign for women's

rights with a collective voice through ecumenical women networks and platforms. Group discussions gave women space to ponder ideas and ways for Christian women to come together to combat violence against women and become partners in God's mission of reconciliation, renewal and restoration of broken communities and all of creation.

Bible study sessions on "Celebration of Faith" invited participants to share their faith and witness confidently. The context of different women characters in the Bible were juxtaposed with their own situations and contexts in South Asia. Women of faith in the Bible provided women hope to be strong in difficult situations and always raise their voice against injustice to bring peace in communities.

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, General Secretary of CCA, introduced the biblical-theological perspectives on the theme "Women of Asia; Arise, Be Awake to Reconcile, Renew and Restore the Creation," and called South Asian women church leaders to actively engage in God's mission of Reconciliation, Renewal and Restoration of Creation and meaningfully participate in the first-ever 'Ecumenical Women's Assembly' to be held in Taiwan.

4.

PROPHETIC DIAKONIA AND ADVOCACY

Objectives

- To empower Asian churches to be competent in responding to social, economic, and political issues through acts of prophetic witness at times of brokenness and human needs;
- To coordinate and facilitate ecumenical advocacy at the national, regional and global levels on emerging issues in Asia, while expressing solidarity, as well as upholding human rights for human dignity.

Emerging Issues in Asia: Advocacy

The CCA responded to emerging Asian issues and accompanied its member churches and councils that were either caught up in conflict situations or needed support on specific occasions. The following are summaries of statements and letters of solidarity that were issued in 2019:

Condemnation of the bombing of Mount Carmel Cathedral in the Philippines

28 January 2019

The CCA condemned the twin bomb blasts that took place on 27 January 2019 inside and outside the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in Barangay Walled City, Jolo, in the Sulu province of the Philippines which killed more than 20 people and wounded 83. While condemning the bombing of Mount Carmel Cathedral, CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara stated, "Such an act of violence against the worshippers, and insolence at a sacred place is an utter disregard for human life and people's right to live in peace". The CCA General Secretary offered prayers, and expressed sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured.

The twin bomb blasts that took place in the Mount Carmel Cathedral was one of the deadliest in recent years in a region long plagued by instability. "With the creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the CCA appeals to Christians in the region to be in unity with all peace-loving Muslim and indigenous communities and work together

against violent extremism," stated the CCA General Secretary.

General Secretary's Statement on International Women's Day

8 March 2019

The CCA General Secretary issued a statement on International Women's Day 2019 in which he called for a transformative shift to ensure gender parity. "A growing trend of continuing disproportionate roles of women and men in society hampers gender equality and the establishment of more inclusive systems. In order to overcome such divisions and reach the goal of equality at all levels, the world needs a transformative shift, especially in removing structural barriers at every level of society," said Dr. Mathews George Chunakara. The General Secretary stated, "Faith-based organisations have a major role in achieving the goal of shaping the future of societies and inclusive communities with gender equality." He further said that the observance of International Women's Day was a unique opportunity for all those concerned to convey the message of hope to the world that gender parity in all walks of life was a paramount target for humanity.

Condemnation of mosque shooting in New Zealand

15 March 2019

The CCA denounced the shooting at worshippers in the Al Noor mosque and the Linwood masjid in Christchurch, New Zealand on 15 March 2019 in which 51 people were reported dead and 20 injured. Responding to the tragic incident, the General Secretary of CCA Dr Mathews George Chunakara stated, "No matter what faith

we adhere or ethnicity we belong to, everybody should be able to live in an atmosphere where peace and security are prevailed and sustained; any act of violence must be prevented with all possible efforts."

"We send our heartfelt support to all those who have been affected; we offer prayers to the Almighty God for the victims, their families and reach out through our grief and distress to our Islamic brothers and sisters in New Zealand," said Dr. Mathews George Chunakara. The CCA General Secretary further added that CCA shared the sentiments of Rev Nicola Teague Grundy, Vice President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, who said "to single out one group of people as a focus of an act of hatred affects us all. There is no place ever for this type of attack on people, and we stand by all people, no matter what their faith. All people should be able to worship and live in a place of safety."

General Secretary's Statement on Easter Sunday bomb blasts in Sri Lanka

21 April 2019

The CCA condemned the horrific acts of violence by terrorists in three churches holding Easter services and three hotels in Sri Lanka on 21st April 2019 which resulted in the death of 215 people and injured more than 450. In a statement, CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara said the CCA believed the heinous acts of terrorism to be incompatible with the values of any religious teachings or moral values of a civilised society. He stated, "Violent attacks such as these are aimed at undermining the unity and religious tolerance of the people of any nation which

will only push to a situation of anarchy and negation of rule of law."

"We urge the authorities in Sri Lanka to take strict actions against the perpetrators. During this critical time in Sri Lanka, our thoughts are with the bereaved families and prayers with the injured. We stand in solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka especially the Christians who live amidst terror and fear," stated the General Secretary. Dr Mathews George also reminded the international community of its responsibility to make every effort to combat the scourge of terrorism and ensure peace and security in the world.

Appeal for prayers for churches in the Philippines after earthquake

23 April 2019

In a letter of solidarity and sympathy addressed to the member churches of CCA in the Philippines and other member churches of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), the CCA General Secretary conveyed sympathy and condolences over the loss of life, the displacement of families and the widespread damages to property and infrastructure caused by the earthquake that struck the Luzon region in northern Philippines on 22 April 2019. Dr Mathews George Chunakara wrote, "Our thoughts and prayers are with the people in the affected areas, especially with the grieving families of the victims and all those affected by this calamity. We are praying for the consolation of all who grieve the loss of their loved ones, and for the healing of the injured." The earthquake which had a magnitude of 6.3 on the Richter scale claimed more than 18 lives and injured over 250 people.

"The CCA expresses solidarity with the people of the Philippines in this tragic situation. We are confident that the strength and resilience of the Filipino people will carry them through this critical time. The CCA urges its member churches across Asia to support the affected people and communities with human and material resources so as to provide moral, social, psychological, and humanitarian aid," said the CCA General Secretary.

Condemnation of police harassment of clergy in the Philippines

27 June 2019

CCA condemned the continued operations by the military and the police in the hinterlands of Mindoro province and other parts of the Philippines as a result of the Oplan Kapatagan (Operation Plan Stability) "all-out war policy" of the government. Expressing CCA's solidarity on behalf of the Asian churches with the churches in the Philippines that are often targeted by the police and military in the country, the CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara stated, "CCA condemns the unlawful acts of the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (PNP/AFP) against ordained clergy and faithful in the churches who are providing pastoral care and support to people who face difficult situations".

Several members of the police and military forces conducted a search operation at the United Methodist Church in Barangay Dangay, Roxas, Oriental Mindoro, despite not producing a search warrant, and ordered the clergy to surrender their guests to the police so that they would not be held as accomplices. Dr. Mathews George Chunakara further stated, "The reported incident

in Dangay United Methodist Church causes fear and anxiety among the pastors and members of the congregations. The police action of barging into the sanctuary of the Church and its premises, flaunting their rifles and harassing the pastors are clear examples of a lack of respect for the sanctity of the Church and Christian witness."

"The authorities should respect the pastoral ministry of the pastors and churches who are mandated to be with the victims of violence, the poor and the deprived", urged the CCA General Secretary.

Condemnation of the Philippine government's act of 'Red-tagging' the National Council of Churches in the Philippines

10 Nov 2019

The General Secretary of the CCA condemned the labelling of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines as a 'Communist Terrorist Group' front and said the accusation was a direct act of red-baiting, which puts to risk the lives and limbs of NCCP staff members, officers, their loved ones, and friends.

"Indiscriminately labelling the NCCP as part of some 'front organisation' of local 'Communist Terrorist Groups' is a reprobate act by the Department of National Defense of the Armed Forces in the Philippines (AFP), and such actions will only create fear among the NCCP staff and their families," stated the General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara.

"The NCCP, an active member of the CCA comprised of several CCA member churches in the Philippines, has been consistently involved in human rights advocacy

as part of its commitment of prophetic witness; especially since the martial law declaration almost half a century ago. The allegations levelled against the NCCP and the propaganda tactic of 'red-tagging' is deplorable," said the head of the CCA. He also urged the Philippine government and its military to rethink its all-out war strategy, and stop the branding of ecumenical organisations such as the NCCP or any other church-related bodies as "communists".

General Secretary's message on World AIDS Day 2019

1 Dec 2019

HIV is a multidimensional issue with social, political and economic aspects impacting the strength and sustainability of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key populations around the world. Despite the many advances we witness in combating the spread of HIV and AIDS in the world, we still stand amidst a turbulent yet transformational time. There were 37.9 million people living with HIV at the end of 2018 and 5.9 million were from Asia and the Pacific with 310,000 new infections detected. Globally, the number of affected persons is decreasing but in Asia, the numbers are increasing; particularly in the Philippines, Pakistan, and Malaysia.

The theme of World AIDS Day – 2019, "Communities make the difference," in this context is significant. Over the past decades, communities have been playing important roles in combating the menace of the epidemic in international, regional, national and local levels.

The CCA calls on all churches and ecumenical councils as well as other related organisations in Asia to recommit themselves to foster their efforts in communi-

ties to combat HIV and AIDS, to reiterate our prophetic role and become prominent voices in advocating for greater awareness, ensuring the dignity and rights of PLHIVs; promoting access to adequate health care; strengthening collaborations with other faiths, civil society organisations and government especially influencing policies and legislation; and building communities of hope that the integrity and dignity of all God's creation need to be valued and protected.

Advocacy Initiatives at the United Nations (UN)

The CCA has been accredited with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2003. The special consultative status enables CCA to facilitate the advocacy of Asian churches in various areas of their concerns through regional and international platforms such as UN Human Rights Council sessions, Universal Periodic Review of UNHRC, UN General Assembly, Security Council, UNESCAP, UNEP, and UNDP. CCA is represented officially at the UN New York, Geneva and Vienna with accredited representatives.

The CCA General Secretary attended and spoke at the Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations (CoNGO) which was held in conjunction with the UN Regional Committee in Asia Pacific meeting, which was held in Bangkok at the Siam University on 29-30 May 2019.

World Health Assembly 2019 and WCC Consultation on Universal Health Coverage

20-28 May 2019/Geneva, Switzerland

CCA was part of the WCC's delegation that participated in the World Health Assembly

2019. The 72nd World Health Assembly of World Health Organisation (WHO), held from 20–28 May 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, focused on Sustainable Development Goal 3 – Good Health and Well Being. Member States of WHO at the World Health Assembly agreed to three resolutions on universal health coverage (UHC) focused on: primary healthcare, the role of community health workers, and the September UN General Assembly high-level meeting on UHC.

In conjunction with the World Health Assembly, WCC also conducted a technical meeting on “Strengthening churches’ contribution to SDG 3” which CCA programme coordinator Dr. Ronald Lalthanmawia attended. The discussion focused on Global mapping of Christian health networks and facilities. This objective of the meeting was to present data gathered so far in the project, discuss bottlenecks, explore partnerships and ways to expedite data gathering. In order to have a wider advocacy and impact on health systems, Christian health institutions need to demonstrate the presence, reach, relevance and contributions towards larger health indices. The meeting also discussed strengthening church-based health promotion programmes. The need for Churches to advocate health prevention, promotion and care and support is evident especially in communicable and non-communicable diseases. There are successful global models being developed.

CCA as a regional ecumenical organisation in Asia has a great role in consolidating information on the existing health facilities and also encourages churches to have a better understanding of health, healing, and wholeness. CCA plans to facilitate initiating the linkage between church and its health mission including health facilities to

be integrated and complemented by each other to have better relevance in addressing health issues and concerns in the community.

The CCA also participated in a second consultation WCC organised on support and strengthening of Christian health networks, which was held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2019.

Asian Regional Workshop on the UN Human Rights Mechanisms: Application for Advocacy

23–26 May 2019 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

The CCA and the WCC jointly organised the Asia Regional Workshop on the UN Human Rights System and Mechanisms: Application for Advocacy. The purpose was to empower member churches and national councils with the requisite knowledge and skills needed to advocate for human rights in the bosom of the UN system. The workshop took place from 23–26 May 2019 at the CCA headquarters. Twenty-one international participants from different churches, councils, civil society organisations, research institutions, and academic institutions from all over Asia were in attendance.

CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara who has rich experiences as a duly recognised representative of CCA and WCC at the UN, both of which are UN officially designated international non-governmental organisations said: “I implore CCA member churches and councils to learn, understand, and utilise the UN human rights system and mechanisms, with a view to make known the human rights situations in your places of origin, and I also appeal to diplomatic representatives at the UN to work for the amelioration

ration of human rights conditions for the benefit of God's people and his whole creation."

With expertise on working within the UN system as well as experiences with an international NGO advocating for human rights before the different UN systems, WCC's programme executive Jennifer Philpot-Nielsen was the main facilitator of the workshops.

At a live Skype video teleconference which lasted for 45 minutes, Hanae Hanzawa of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) at the Regional Office for Southeast Asia, based in Bangkok, Thailand, gave an interactive presentation on 'The United Nations Human Rights System'.

Ms. Philpot-Nielsen engaged the participants in scrutinising case studies of human rights involving their countries. They delved on actual reports of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of different countries, sharing their insights and critique. The different sessions scrutinised the UPR procedure. Participants shared information about case studies related to women's rights and children's rights in Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines, and South Korea.

The training programme ended with a workshop to explore the options of churches and councils in different parts of Asia to use the UN human rights mechanisms as avenues to work for improving the human rights laws and practices in their respective places of origin.

The participants acquired the following skills during the consultation: the ability and confidence to talk about human rights advocacy to the churches, the ability to

navigate the UN UPR website to locate a country report and other useful information, as well as filing an NGO report before the UPR meeting at the United Nations. Examples of new values and attitudes learnt included the following: understanding the importance of human rights in our lives, empathy for the needs of others for help, and respect for other people's views.

Participants enumerated the strengths of the workshop that it helped them to actually see and use actual UPR reports; participants' sharing how the churches and communities can speak out for justice; an inclusive approach to engaging all advocates of human rights; knowledge about the availability of UN instruments to address human rights-related matters. The outcome of this consultation was that participants were already thinking of strategies to make the church aware and involved in working on human rights issues, including minority rights, statelessness, migrant rights, comparison of constitutions in light of UN human rights instruments.

Advocacy at UN Women Asia Pacific Region

30 May 2019 / Bangkok, Thailand

CCA has been accredited with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2003. Due to this special status, CCA has been facilitating the advocacy of Asian churches in various areas such, Women Rights, Universal Periodic Reviews on Minorities Rights and Statelessness by ensuring participation at various UN events in the regions and also at three different UN centres depending upon the needs and requests from Asian Churches.

CCA has specifically been engaging with

UN Women at the regional and international level to continue advocacy on emerging concerns of Asian women. In this regard, a delegation consisting of CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, Rev. Kyrle Kim, the Moderator for CCA Programme Committee, and Ms. Sunila Ammar, Coordinator of EWAAV programme visited UN Women Regional Office at Bangkok, Thailand on 30 May 2019. They were engaged in regional advocacy on women's concerns in Asia.

The CCA delegation shared the work of EWAAV programme and its impact on the constituency of CCA in the prevention of violence against women. They also shared that under the EWAAV umbrella, CCA was addressing the primary issue of gender inequality through ending violence against women in all forms, along with encouraging women participation and leadership in the society, ensuring women's role in peacebuilding initiatives in the communities, and women's involvement in establishing resilient societies.

Aijamal Duishebaeva, UN Women Campaign Coordinator commented that CCA EWAAV programme was similar to the UN Women Programme's activity for Ending Violence against Women and that there were possibilities for collaboration. As UN Women wanted to work with faith based organisations and listen to their voices as well, she agreed on sharing technical support and resource persons with CCA whenever needed. She also suggested that EWAAV networks in CCA's constituencies engage with UN Women country offices and share their opinion on Beijing + 25 review for UN Commission on Status of Women in March 2020.

International Consultation on Statelessness and Human Trafficking

20-23 May 2019 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

Despite the large numbers of stateless and trafficked people in Asia, the churches in Asia have neither adequately understood nor responded to this global humanitarian crisis. However, the WCC and CCA raised their prophetic voices and jointly organised the "International Consultation on Statelessness and Human Trafficking: Prevention, Reduction, and Protection" from 20-23 May 2019 at the CCA Headquarters in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The consultation had two key objectives: to equip participants with the knowledge of international laws pertaining to fundamental human rights; and to formulate a plan of action with clear short-term goals as a common faith-based response to statelessness and human trafficking.

In a keynote address, CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara acknowledged statelessness, forced migration, and human trafficking as growing trends in the world. In the Asian contexts, those without identity papers or passports make for the easiest targets of human trafficking. The implications for such persons are restricted access to employment, property rights, banking and financial services, school enrolment, marriage, voting, and national justice systems. As they are the most vulnerable, they are also the most susceptible to being trafficked into dirty, dangerous, and degrading jobs.

Segma Agfaw, the Programme Executive for International Affairs of WCC, traced the history of the involvement of churches

in the context of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, and exhorted all churches to serve the wounded and marginalized, and provide for them a transformative experience. "Let us care for the stateless and trafficked. Make the church as a sanctuary. Utter their voice prophetically. Include them in our community of pilgrims," she said.

Bongkot Napaumporn represented the UNHCR. She discussed the legal frameworks of statelessness in relation to the rights to nationality, gender discrimination in nationality laws that detrimentally affect Asia's women, and birth registration as a tool to prevent statelessness.

Experts from different organisations gave short presentations and case studies. Andrew Khoo of Malaysia, shared insights on comparative national policies. Dr. Audeh Quawas talked about the issues of statelessness in Lebanon. Bishop I Ketut Siaga Waspada raised a pertinent question about the problems of the stateless Karens who have lived in "temporary shelters" for over two decades. Dr. Sam Alwyn (Myanmar), who also presented a case study, brought along four persons from the Mae La refugee camps from Mae Sot, Thailand. Rev. Dr. Sungjae Kim, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Japan, asserted that the Technical Intern Training of Japan was akin to slave-like human trafficking, as foreign migrants were hired through false promises, deceit, and low pay. Throughout the consultation, Dr. Moses Manohar and Ms. Minji Kim raised thought-provoking questions, such as: why the state had turned into an institution from which recognition and validation must be begged, how governments who violate international laws can be punished, and what the social structures have promoted the rise of forced migration.

The consultation resulted in a *Communiqué* that recalled the mission of the church to welcome refugees. Asian churches were asked to raise consciousness and extend to the stateless people pastoral care, skill training, employment opportunities, and legal aid. There was a call for collaborating with government agencies, UN agencies, and civil society organisations in order to sustain advocacy efforts and ameliorate the conditions of stateless and trafficked people. Forty-one participants devised follow-up plans for their local contexts, which included social sensitisation, ecclesiological participation, and academic accreditation.

Asia Consultation on Child Rights Protection and Advocacy to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

13–16 October 2019 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

CCA, through its Asia Advocacy Network on Dignity and Rights of Children (AANDRoC) organised an Asia Consultation on "Child Rights Protection and Advocacy to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation," in collaboration with WCC. ANDROC was the outcome of CCA's Jakarta Consultation on Rights and Dignity of Children, which was held in 2018.

The advocacy initiative of CCA and WCC brought together child rights advocates from its member constituencies and UN related bodies including UNICEF. This was felt to be a timely consultation given the rising sexual exploitation of children and violence against children in Asian countries.

The Consultation aimed to identify the role of the Church and other Faith Based

Organisations (FBOs) in strengthening advocacy against child sexual abuse (CSE) and exploitation. It was also to sensitise and remind the constituencies of CCA and WCC about the significance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the significance of commemorating the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of the UNCRC.

The consultation was placed in the light of The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2018 index, called "Out of the Shadows," which explored how 40 different countries are responding to the threat of sexual violence against children. The EIU's recommendations for countries including Indonesia, India, and the Philippines highlighted the need to strengthen legal frameworks and protections for children against sexual violence. It also stated that most national rape laws did not protect young boys. The report advised engagement with the tourism industry, the technology industry, and the media. Most Asian countries currently lack preventive measures for prospective offenders, and offender support to prevent reoffending. The report also encourages strengthening engagement of the civil societies.

Thirty-eight people from 13 different countries across Asia attended the consultation. They came from CCA member churches and councils, had experiences and, or were currently working on the rights and dignity of children. Participants who attended the consultation included representatives from WCC, End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT), UNICEF, and World Vision International (WVI). Regional and national bodies such as "Voice of the Children," Malaysia, Salinlahi Alliance for Children's Concerns, and the Association for the Rights of Children in

South East Asia.

At the opening session, CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara spoke about the continued efforts of CCA and WCC over the years to highlight the need to uphold and protect the dignity and rights of children. "CCA and WCC jointly initiated this consultation with the aim to sensitise the member churches and member councils and to find ways to collaborate with wider bodies operating in the secular framework. Another important aim is to identify the role of the church and other FBOs in strengthening collective efforts for advocacy against sexual abuse and exploitation of children", said Dr. Mathews George Chunakara. He explained that the AANDRoC, a regional advocacy platform initiated by CCA, had been trying to mobilise CCA's member churches and councils and enable them to be involved in advocacy not only at the church level but beyond the church circles into wider society, and also extend their advocacy to the regional, national and even the international level through UN mechanisms.

Masimba Kuchera, a member of the Commission of Churches on International Affairs of the WCC, spoke on the topic "Our Commitment to Upholding and Protecting the Dignity and Rights of Children". He affirmed that children are a very important component of Jesus' teaching. He also reiterated the history of Churches' Commitment to Children (CCC) document that was raised during WCC Assembly in Busan. He further said, "CCC is not a final document, but it is a living document" referring to the freedom to adopt CCC to one's context and life, time to time and place to place. He encouraged churches to engage with society as churches live within the society.

Ajit Hazra of the WVI reiterated the impor-

tance of churches being practical to pool their resources and the need to work with respective governments.

A presentation on "Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation" was delivered by Thomas Muller from ECPAT International. He highlighted the various ways children all over the world and especially in Asia were exploited. He focused his presentation particularly on sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, and online child sexual exploitation in the Asian context. He reiterated that there was no typical offender and offenders could be found everywhere. Society has always focused on the perpetrators and only seeks to get them off the streets. The victim acts as a stepping stone to the perpetrators. The approach and focus need to be changed radically so as to be victim-centred." He said that churches, as FBOs, had an important role in addressing this issue, therefore, churches should not take a neutral position but think differently and address new challenges, embrace the complexity of this concern, and come up with new comprehensive and integrated solutions.

Grace C. Agcaoili, the child protection specialist of UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office spoke on the legal frameworks, mechanisms, and tools for the protection of children. She introduced some international and regional commitments on protecting child rights. Pointing out that religious communities had almost 5 billion members in the world she reiterated the importance of collaborating with religious communities as their potential for action was great. With their moral influence, churches could influence thinking, foster dialogue and set priorities for members of their communities; they could offer a variety of networks for the care and

protection of children and the safeguarding of their rights. She urged the participants, "When a child tells you something, the first instinct must be to trust the child. Very few children can manufacture details of incidents of this nature and we must be careful in our response to the child".

Participants discussed the role of churches in providing safe space for children. Rev. Nyoman Agustinus from Indonesia emphasized the importance of having a church level safeguarding policy and code of conduct. He underlined the importance of having interfaith actions to reach out to more children. Ella Nini S. Sonawane from India reiterated that it was an imperative mandate of churches to protect the children. Arceli P. Bile from the Philippines reminded all present of the call to churches to value children and affirm their inherent right to live in dignity, protect and be a nurturing community and sanctuary, raise community awareness, and be a herald for justice and peace.

Country and regional presentations on Child Rights Protection situation were shared by participants from India, Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, and Taiwan. Halin J. Dev from India mentioned that India had strong legal frameworks, but the implementation needed to be strengthened. John Pattiwael from Indonesia explained that Indonesia was still struggling to make the justice system accessible for everyone regardless of the location where one lived, either in an urban setting or in remote areas. Eule Rico Bonganay from the Philippines reported that most child abuse and exploitation cases in the Philippines were resolved out-of-court. Other countries and regions, in fact, were having similar situations too. They had poor access to the ful-

filment of basic needs and the respective governments were lacking initiatives for actions for prevention, indicating they did not take any case seriously enough.

Some participants were asked to share the best practices that had been implemented in their local context, especially in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, where the churches were trying to implement child friendly church policy and to adopt child friendly environment.

Two Bible Studies were conducted during the consultation. Rev. George Cherian from Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church in India based his Bible Study from the Gospel of Luke chapter 18: 15-17. He recalled how God valued children as kingdom builders. Bishop Ligaya revisited the story of Amnon and Tamar (2 Samuel 13) to reflect on sexual abuse by one's family members.

At the end of the consultation, the participants came up with action plans and a *Communique*. The participants also called all churches to action. It was decided to disseminate posters and leaflets to all CCA member churches and councils as a call to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Training on Ecumenical Diakonia and Development

4-8 December 2019 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

Training for staff and officials of diakonal mission departments of churches and related organisations facilitated jointly by the CCA and WCC. The training was focused on the churches' participation and mission in prophetic diakonia within the Asian context. The training was attended by 41 partici-

pants from across CCA and WCC Asian member churches, as well as from specialised ecumenical diakonal agencies in Asia was held at the headquarters of the CCA in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 4 to 7 December 2019.

Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, the General Secretary of the CCA in a thematic address at the opening session outlined the metamorphosis of the ecumenical perspectives on diakonia. He stated, "The challenge of diakonia as emphasized by the ecumenical movement through WCC's facilitation has always been to encourage diakonia to move from a charity-model approach to justice, and leap over national and ecumenical frontiers to respond to local and global issues; to partner in god's mission, and be prophetic, transformative, and justice-seeking."

In a presentation on "The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)," Rev. Matthew Ross, Programme Executive for Diakonia and Capacity-Building in the WCC, highlighted SDG 8 and 9 that relate to "Decent work and economic growth" and "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure". Rev. Ross admitted, "The relationship between churches and international ecumenical and church-related development agencies from the West continue to evolve and has not always been an easy relationship; however, the shared priorities for the value and dignity of human beings force us to work for the betterment of humankind and care of the earth."

Rev. Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), in his presentation on "Diakonia as the Mission of the Church" elaborated, "Diakonia is that which adds to the value and message of mission. The images of

the church as salt, light, vinedresser, and gardener capture this diaconal task of the church.”

Specific issues in “Church’s Diaconal Ministry” such as that of “Health and Healing” and of “Women and Children” were presented by three panellists- Rev. Debora Purada Sinaga of Huria Kristen Batak Protestan, Rev. Juliet S Aguilar of United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), and Dr. Ronald Lalthanmawia, Programme Coordinator, Prophetic Diakonia and Advocacy, CCA.

Various leadership models from both biblical and management perspectives were presented by Rev. Abraham Varkey of the Christian Agency for Rural Development (CARD) in India.

Stories of change from different diaconal contexts emphasizing “People’s Participation in Development” were shared by diaconal mission agencies of three-member churches of CCA and WCC in Asia: the Social Health and Education Development (SHED) Board of the Bangladesh Baptist Church, CARD of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church in India, and the Social Empowerment Vision in Action wing (SEVA) of the Church of South India. AM

Sessions on Organisational Management and Human Resource Management anchored by the Christian Institute of Management (CIM) strengthened the participants’ perspective on this topic.

The participants worked out holistic strategies for human resource development in their respective churches and related agencies. They identified key issues related to SDGs that CCA and WCC member churches and their diaconal missions can effectively respond to.

The purpose of the training was: to help participants to contextualize the role of the Church in working towards SDGs in ecumenical engagements; to create a network for future exchange of resources and opportunities for cross-learning of best practices in ecumenical diaconal engagements.

SPECIAL PROGRAMME: ACTION TOGETHER IN COMBATING HIV & AIDS IN ASIA (ATCHAA)

HIV and AIDS programme continues to be a special priority area of CCA. Several skill building and advocacy programmes have been initiated by CCA to address the concerns along with efforts to build an HIV competent church and community in Asia.

In order to effectively respond to HIV and AIDS with the member churches and councils, CCA is continuing its journey in building capacity of its members to become inclusive and relevant for people living with HIV and AIDS through CCA's Action Together to Combat HIV and AIDS in Asia (ATCHAA) programme.

Asia-Pacific is the region with the second-highest number of people living with HIV in the world – an estimated 5.9 million in 2018. (UNAIDS 2018 The Prevention Gap Report).

In order to contribute to the initiatives of global, national and local bodies to combat the alarming trend of an increase in the number of HIV and AIDS affected people, CCA will join together with governments and UN agencies such as UNAIDS. CCA is engaged in working with and through its member constituencies in Asia at national and local levels.

The specific **objectives** developed by CCA include:

1. To **Build the Capacity** of CCA members by training facilitators at regional, sub-regional and local levels with exchange of learning and experiences.
2. To scale up the **Advocacy** initiatives among CCA member constituencies targeting member churches, governments and UN agencies.
3. To strengthen existing **Faith-based Networks** and initiate new networks of faith-based groups in Asia in order to address the consequences of HIV and AIDS.
4. To play its role in an effective, efficient, responsible and sustainable way of addressing the problem of HIV and AIDS.

The **expected outcomes** are

1. CCA programmes make significant contributions towards the global HIV and AIDS goals of “getting to zero”: zero new infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths within Asia.
2. CCA member churches and councils work more actively in solidarity with inter-faith partnerships in advocacy for addressing care, support and treatment including Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART).
3. CCA member churches and communities will be more competent in responding to HIV and AIDS and related issues, including human sexuality, Sexual Orientation Gender Identity (SOGI), reproductive health and human rights, based on faith values and inclusive principles.

STRATEGIES

- **Capacity-Building** of Facilitators within CCA Network.
- **Self-Assessment of Churches’** inclusiveness by using Appreciative Inquiry Methods.
- **Exchange of learning** and sharing of resources within CCA and Interfaith Network.
- Addressing factors governing HIV vulnerabilities including **Human Sexuality and Gender**.
- **Documentation of good practices** and building resources for models of intervention within the network.
- **Motivating Youth** as change agents.
- **Specific Advocacy** related to prevention, care, support and treatment to global and concerned organisation, development agencies and governments regionally and locally.
- **Dissemination of learning** at national and international forums based on first-hand research.
- **Asian Interfaith Network on AIDS (AINA):** Interfaith network will be strengthened in each country for exchange of learning, expertise and linkages for care and support within faith-based communities and organisations in Asia.
- Provides and facilitates **interfaith platforms** to address HIV and AIDS issues.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

Regional Skill Building Workshop for HIV and AIDS Facilitators in Asia

19–21 March 2019/Chiang Mai, Thailand

A regional skill building for HIV facilitators organised by the CCA-ATCHAA, brought together 22 participants across Asia from 19–21 March 2019. The participants were from diverse backgrounds including pastors, lay leaders, medical practitioners, social workers, community development workers, and psychologists.

The workshop started with worship that highlighted the stories of struggle and hope of our People Living with HIV (PLHIV) brothers and sisters. Dr. Mathews George Chunakara, CCA General Secretary made opening remarks and welcomed the participants. The General Secretary then outlined a brief history of CCA's work on HIV and AIDS.

One of the components of the workshop was contextual bible studies. It gave participants the platform to re-read the bible in the context of HIV, and from the perspective of a vulnerable and marginalized community as the PLHIV and through this identify the role of churches in journeying together with PLHIV. It also introduced participants to a creative way of reflecting on our scripture in the present time.

A different approach in giving technical inputs via an interactive process where participants were encouraged to revise, review and update information regarding HIV and AIDS were used. The process raised their awareness of the current developments surrounding HIV and AIDS especially in the Asia region. Participants

were intrigued by the latest news regarding the second cured patient of HIV. The new scientific development and ethical issues surrounding this were discussed. Dr. Ronald Lalthanmawia, Programme Coordinator of CCA, explained that both the patients were treated for blood cancer, their bone marrow was transplanted with that of an HIV resistant donor and they thus became HIV negative. He also pointed out that the treatment was for cancer and not HIV. The need for more commitment to research around HIV was then emphasized.

After equipping participants with the current HIV situation in Asia, they were then exposed to three different organisations namely Church of Thailand's (CCT) AIDS Ministry in Baan Sabaay, AIDSNET and MPLUS. CCT AIDS Ministry in Baan Sabaay is a shelter home for PLHIV and the participants were able to interact with HIV positive persons and listen to their stories. AIDSNET's main focus is on building partnerships, networking, collaboration, and sustainability as well as giving opportunities to work, build their skills and integrate PLHIV back with society. MPLUS is a foundation for key affected populations. Their services involved reaching out, recruitment, testing, treatment, prevention and retention of their target population. Upon hearing the testimonies of PLHIVs, some participants were moved and took courage in taking the HIV test to increase awareness and break the stigma surrounding it.

The exposure gave participants a hands-on experience with PLHIVs stories and work of organisations that provide prevention, treatment, care, and support. Participants shared their observations on the commit-

ment of the government, private sectors and the communities in combating the epidemic. They also highlighted the importance of collaboration and consolidation of all parties involved. Their experiences from the exposure emphasized the value of journeying together with the PLHIV and recognising their voice in the face of the epidemic.

As the workshop progressed, the participants reiterated the need for the church to revitalise their existing efforts and look for new pathways to effectively respond to combating HIV and AIDS. The exposure experience gave the participants a start on preparations for the action plan. It was expected that the participants' action plan would be implemented in their respective churches and communities. Follow-up activities to intensify churches' initiatives in contributing to the global, regional and national efforts in ending the epidemic also have been discussed.

Youth Motivation Programme for Nepal

21–23 June 2019/Kathmandu, Nepal

CCA together with the National Council of Churches of Nepal (NCCN) conducted a three-day workshop with 35 youth from all over Nepal. The Youth Motivation Programme was guided by the theme "Young People at the Centre: Taking the Lead in HIV Advocacy." The workshop was held at Emmanuel Church, Kathmandu, Nepal from 21 to 23 June 2019.

R.C. Archarya, General Secretary of NCCN welcomed the participants and emphasized the need to sensitise the Christian youth in Nepal especially outside of Kathmandu as they were key agents in Church's

relevance to the community.

Reflecting on the Biblical text about the healing of the leper, Rev. Vinod Victor, of CSI, emphasized the need for solidarity of people living with pain and agony. Churches need to follow the Jesus model of compassion, stretching out of our hands and touching the marginalized.

Taking into account the lack of awareness of the National AIDS programme in Nepal, the youth were made aware of the basic facts of HIV including the national situation. This new information led the youth to understand the role of the church and the youth in the church in responding effectively to HIV and AIDS. The youth motivation programme was an interactive participatory process that required the participants to engage actively in all activities. Creative group work, contextual interpretation of the Bible and analysis of real-life situations helped the youth to think outside their comfort zone, to create a safe space within the church and the youth group and become a channel of learning.

Nirmala Gurung, an executive member of CCA emphasized the effectiveness of the simple methods used to approach and address a topic that is not normally spoken about within the church premises and assured that these processes will be continued. The youth leaders of the CSI also interacted with their peers in Kathmandu and discussed the possibilities of collaborations in this ministry.

The participants developed a plan of action to reach the churches in rural and remote areas and developed a strategy of churches taking the lead in demanding

services for testing, treatment, care and support for PLHIV.

During the discussions, the youth affirmed that they play a major role in this kind of ministry as they have a better understanding of the situation and identify themselves as part of the vulnerable population. They affirmed that they could be change agents to promote prevention and be the source of healing for those in pain and agony, especially for PLHIV.

Youth Motivation Programme for Cambodia.

15-17 July 2019/Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Forty-five young people from different churches in provinces of Cambodia participated in the workshop.

The participants of the youth leadership development programme affirmed their integral role in the church and society. The training focused on building the capacity of young people in Cambodia in responding to the call of intensifying advocacy in HIV and AIDS issues. The participants recognised that their faith should be nurtured so that their vision of a vibrant and dynamic church would be realized. They emphasized that they are not merely leaders of the local churches in the future, but leaders of today with a vision to contribute amidst a constantly evolving Cambodian Society. They highlighted the importance of reflecting and relating to a wider faith community especially in addressing socio-economic and political realities focusing on HIV and AIDS advocacy.

The participants expressed the need for continuous education especially among young people with vulnerabilities surrounding HIV.

The participants expressed their gratitude to CCA for providing them a platform to come together to discuss and share ideas on how to contribute to their local churches, the ecumenical community, and the Cambodian society. They affirmed that their dynamism as Christian youth will bring new perspectives and new ideas in building a brighter future not just for the church but for the society. The participants affirmed their commitment to contributing to the HIV advocacy efforts and expressed their solidarity with PLHIVs.

Ecumenical Youth Consultation on HIV, Human Sexuality and Gender Justice Advocacy

13-15 September 2019/Cebu, Philippines

CCA together with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and Kalipunan ng Kristiyanong Kabataan sa Pilipinas (KKKP – Ecumenical Youth Council) conducted a three-day workshop. Twenty-seven young people from three provinces such as Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao attended. The workshop was held at United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)'s Shalom Centre in Cebu City, Philippines from the 13 –15 September 2019.

The workshop started with worship led by the NCCP and KKKP. The UCCP, host of the programme welcomed the participants. Churches must embrace PLHIV and gender minorities as "the least," noted *Iglesia Evangelica Metodista En Las Islas Filipinas* youth president Jon Dave Angeles, reflecting on the passage on the judgment of the nations from the Gospel according to Matthew. "We are sheep and goats who will be judged not simply according to

ministries like singing, dancing or administering inside the church but more so on how we treat the least," he said. "The picture of Christ separating the sheep from the goats ought to get under our skin and compel us to consider the direction of our lives," noted Blessy Grace de Leon of the United Methodist Church.

The ensuing programme combined orientations and dialogues on HIV and its vulnerabilities such as human sexuality and stories of individuals with different sexual orientations.

Citing preliminary findings from research on queer faith, Ateneo De Manila University Development Studies researcher Robin Dagle said: "Homonegativity is present across all denominations, from affirming to rejecting... Is there hope? Most young people who participated so far say there is: when the older generations pass on." He then encouraged participants to establish brave — not just safe — spaces: "In safe spaces, we tend to not speak our minds, thinking we might offend people. We must create spaces where everybody is brave enough to express their beliefs without being judged so that we can talk about them."

Jon Neil Perfecio of HIV testing facility and treatment hub Balay Malingkawasnon (BM) explained the Philippine HIV situation, including how even health practitioners were not capacitated to handle cases properly. He also explained the work of BM, a localised, faith-based response to HIV.

While Perfecio spoke, volunteers from BM provided free HIV screening onsite, in a software called community-based screening. Before leaving, the participants visited the BM facility under Visayas Commu-

nity Medical Centre, which is owned by the UCCP. Participants agreed that stigma must be battled with protracted education on HIV, especially in the grassroots.

CCA-ATCHAA used specialised tools to motivate the participants to do ministries relating to HIV, human sexuality and gender justice. They also facilitated the action planning, during which the participants pledged to orient more people on HIV and SOGI.

Women Responding and Strengthening HIV and AIDS Advocacy

19-21 November 2019/Hsinchu, Taiwan

Forty women from churches, councils, and related organisations in Asia came together at the Presbyterian Bible College in Hsinchu to participate in a three-day workshop on "Asian Ecumenical Women Responding and Strengthening HIV and AIDS Advocacy". The workshop, held from 19 to 21 November 2019, was organised in conjunction with the AEWA which commenced from 22 November 2019.

Participants of the pre-AEWA workshop were encouraged to re-read and reinterpret the Bible through daily contextual bible studies and discussions; they also learnt more about the situation and issues of HIV and AIDS through quizzes, assessment tools, and appreciative inquiry.

Prof. Nai-Ying Ko from National Cheng Kung University gave a comprehensive presentation on the HIV and AIDS situation in Taiwan and emphasized on "Undetected equals Untransmittable" i.e. "U=U," and the role of churches in effectively re-

sponding to the HIV epidemic via “ABCD” which stands for A – Awareness, B – Breaking Stigma, C – Community and Care, D – drugs like Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, ART and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis.

In the session “Best Practices in Responding to HIV and AIDS” Executive Director of Taiwan Lourdes Association, Dr. Paul Hsu gave a clear picture about the demography of PLHIV in Taiwan and their needs and areas of concern. Dr. Hsu also presented a HIV Community Care Model that could be replicated in other Asian communities. Additionally, he shared strategies like Risk Behaviour Redefinition, Universal Precaution, Gender/ Sex Equality and so on to improve the quality of life of PLHIV.

The participants also had the opportunity to interact with a PLHIV. Listening to her experience brought matters into sharp relief for a number of participants. She said, “My faith community and family supported and encouraged me after I was diagnosed with HIV; this was crucial in my life as PLHIV and so I encourage you and leaders of religious communities to be sensitive and accepting of PLHIV”.

Susan Chang, President of The Garden of Mercy foundation in Taiwan inspired and

moved the participants with her life story of starting her own foundation in 1998 and the many challenges she faced over the years to take care of those who had been rejected and stigmatised because of their HIV status and AIDS. Chang told the group, “I urge you to hear God’s call and do something in your contexts when you return from this workshop”.

All participants have prepared action plans to take back with them to their respective countries and communities after the workshop. These would enable them to share what they have learnt, share the resources received and bring awareness about the issue of HIV and AIDS to a larger group of people.

Rachael Shanti PA Samuel, a participant of this pre-AEWA workshop from Malaysia said, “I come from a conservative church and so it is not easy to approach the community with the issues of HIV and AIDS directly. However, after being a part of the workshop and hearing about the work and lives of many people associated with this issue, I am deeply touched and motivated to implement the action plan that I have prepared in a manner that is relevant to my church; I will then be able to find an entry point for HIV and AIDS.”

ADVOCACY

Advocacy Meetings with UNAIDS and UNICEF

7-8 February 2019/Bangkok, Thailand

Advocacy meetings with international agencies and like-minded organisations is one of the strategies of CCA-ATCHAA in expanding its work in HIV and AIDS issues. Several skill building and advocacy programmes have been conducted, as well as efforts to build an HIV competent church

and community. As part of the ATCHAA initiatives, CCA complements efforts by Government and UN agencies like UNAIDS in fast-tracking HIV response ending AIDS by 2030 at country, regional and global levels by working with and through its member church constituency in Asia through Strategic interventions in Advocacy, Capacity-building and Networking.

With this in mind, an advocacy meeting

with UN agencies and CCA was organised on February 7 and 8, 2019. CCA-ATCHAA Programme Coordinator, Dr. Ronald Lalthanmawia and Advocacy Coordinator Jay Roy Tipayan met with Stela Sacaliuc – Regional Coordinator for FBOs, Dr. Salil Panakadan, Regional Programme Advisor of UNAIDS Regional office in Bangkok and Shirley Mark Prabhu, HIV Specialist, Knowledge and Advocacy of UNICEF in the Asia Pacific Regional Office of UNICEF.

The meeting aimed to strengthen the already established partnership between CCA and UN. CCA-ATCHAA's 2018 programme report and CCA's 2019 programme plan was presented. Dr. Salil Panakadan expressed his appreciation for the efforts of CCA in addressing issues surrounding HIV. The work of CCA is very crucial especially in a faith diverse context of Asia. He also mentioned that the activities CCA is incorporating in its Skill building workshops such as contextual bible study and action planning are new but very useful in a faith-based setting.

Stela Sacaliuc expressed her gratefulness to CCA for initiating a meeting with her since she was newly placed as the focal person for faith based organisation of UNAIDS. She commended the work of CCA in complementing the global, regional and national efforts in eliminating HIV. She then continued to discuss the various strategies of UNAIDS where CCA could be involved in.

In conclusion, UNAIDS and CCA-ATCHAA agreed to solidify the partnership by continuous collaboration and cooperation. UNAIDS committed to continue providing technical and programme input, resource sharing and possible joint programmes on Asian Interfaith Consultations on HIV and AIDS.

CCA-ATCHAA team also met with Shirley Mark Prabhu to discuss the possible collaboration of CCA and UNICEF in addressing the rights and dignity of children. She said that CCA had a great scope in contributing towards the global initiatives on HIV and AIDS and supporting children's rights. She emphasized that there were a lot of resources that CCA could tap from the churches and its partners, and also that churches already have good programmes for children and this must be maximized. Shirley also mentioned that CCA could be a part of the Inter-Agency Review Committee which meets every 2 months as a start in building a network with Child Rights organisations.

Follow-up meetings have been scheduled to further strengthen these partnerships and linkages.

Consultation on Strengthening HIV and AIDS Advocacy and Networking

22 March 2019/Chiang Mai, Thailand

A one-day consultation on Strengthening HIV and AIDS Advocacy and Networking in Asia was held in conjunction with Regional Skill Building for HIV Facilitators. On 22 March 2019, twenty-five participants from Regional Skill Building for HIV Facilitators were joined by experts from UNICEF, Love Yourself University and CCT AIDS Ministry (CAM) to discuss further the role of Faith Based Organisations (FBO)s in responding to HIV and AIDS and explore how they could step-up their existing advocacy efforts.

Shirley Mark Prabhu, Adolescent Health and HIV Specialist of UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office made a presen-

tation on "Strengthening HIV and AIDS Advocacy and Networking HIV Response – Adolescents and Children." She highlighted the current situation of children and adolescents living with HIV in East Asia. She emphasized that, "There is a rise in new HIV infections among specific young key populations in several countries in Asia". She also mentioned that health care services and systems are not youth friendly and we need to ensure that children and adolescents' access to services should be enabling and empowering. "There are many barriers to testing and access to treatment as young people have to take consent from parents and that has been very challenging", she added.

Danvic Rosadino, head of Love Yourself University - the education and advocacy arm of Love Yourself, a PLHIV service provider organisation from the Philippines reiterated the fear and apprehension of getting tested. His presentation focused on the access and availability of services for men who have sex with men. He emphasized that "Even as an adult there are so many things going through your mind before getting tested, and I can imagine how difficult it will be for children and younger people". Punctuating the need for holistic care and support, he asserted that we need to love ourselves first in order to care for others. "By embracing and nurturing our self-worth, we inspire others to do the same and create ripples of positive change in the community," he added. His presentation ended with a challenge to the participants: "Are You a Safe Space for others?"

Rev. Sanan Wutti of CCT AIDS Ministry (CAM) presented the decade long work of CAM in responding to the epidemic. They have been responding to HIV and AIDS

since the epidemic entered Thailand in the 80s. They have provided counselling, care, support, and opened shelter homes for PLHIV. They also train volunteers from the community for action. They approach a person holistically including physical, psychosocial, emotional and spiritual support. In the multi-religious context of Asia Rev. Sanan's presentation made participants feel that the Church has an important voice and plays an important role in complementing the actions of the government, NGOs and UN agencies.

During the discussion, the participants highlighted the need to find an entry point to discuss HIV and AIDS, vulnerabilities to HIV infection and role of the Church in these ministries. They also mentioned the need to strengthen the data and contribute towards it through various research and programmes conducted by the churches. The consultation also recognised the need to document good practices by the Churches and disseminate the information to government and UN agencies in order to play a pivotal role in combating the epidemic. The participants identified existing platforms in the churches to discuss such topics including the pulpit, Sunday schools, youth camp and retreats and women's fellowship.

The participants committed themselves to be ambassadors to reach out to PLHIV and key populations in their own settings. They also revised their action plans from the skill building workshop in order to enhance their knowledge, reduce stigma and discrimination, provide care and support and also aim towards inclusiveness of the church. The consultation ended with an emphasis on the need to discuss age appropriate education towards reproductive health, understanding the body and com-

mit to a healthy lifestyle.

Ecumenical Learning Exchanges of Churches and Interfaith Organisations

19–22 August 2019/Yangon, Myanmar

Indonesia and Myanmar share similarities when it comes to having a diverse faith context thus an exchange of ecumenical learning is suitable. Moreover, Myanmar has been doing notable programmes in the interfaith field with the leadership of Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC). MCC played a vital role in establishing the Myanmar Interfaith Network on AIDS (MINA). MINA has been recognised by various UN agencies and other international organisations for its work in tailoring their responses in a faith-based setting.

Kaythi Min Din, MCC's Associate General Secretary welcomed the participants from Indonesia and talked about her experience in working with the HIV issue. She shared that she had a first-hand experience of stigma and discrimination while working on the field. She then continued saying that "currently Myanmar's HIV situation is getting better when it comes to HIV treatment and prevention but a change in attitude is necessary to combat the epidemic. It is where FBOs can contribute. We should keep on educating our constituencies in stopping the stigma surrounding HIV."

Oussama Tawil, UNAIDS Country Director extended his gratitude to FBOs during his opening remarks. He highlighted the importance of faith among the people of Asia and how can it be utilised in tailoring our response to the epidemic. He reiterated that "FBOs role in responding to HIV is very crucial especially as they are working

in the grassroots level." He looked forward to the work of FBOs in constructing an interfaith theology focusing on the theology of compassion in responding to HIV issue.

Khawn Taung, MINA General Secretary said, "Religion plays an important role in prevention and raising awareness. We should realize the need for coordination and cooperation among religions and religious leaders and those of faith groups to effectively respond to the epidemic". She was encouraged by the continuous effort of CCA in advocating and creating networks to address the issue. "The leadership of CCA in this particular area is outstanding, they do not only respond in the Christian perspective but opened up into a wider platform of interfaith collaboration. They keep on journeying among the marginalized community regardless of faith expression. MINA's work will not be successful without the guidance of the Asian Interfaith Network on AIDS (AINA) which was initiated by CCA," she concluded.

Participants from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Islamic organisations from Indonesia stressed the importance of having an activity like this to learn from each other and build networks for future engagements. They were inspired by the programmes and stories shared by different FBOs in Myanmar. They lauded the excellent work of MCC and MINA together with CCA's guidance. Aan, representing the PLHIV organisation of Indonesia, expressed his admiration towards the harmonious relationship of different religions in Myanmar when it came to the HIV issue. He hoped that Indonesia will also foster a more open environment in order to respond effectively.

The exposure visits to Good Shepherd Sisters Convent, Ratana Metta Organisation,

and Ashoka Rama Shwenhinthar Yaylei Monastery gave the participants an opportunity to interact and learn from the three organisation and PLHIVs, allowing them to view practical and real-life situations in the process of creating programmes and activities towards HIV issue. They expressed the importance of integrating with the PLHIV community. It is essential for shifting attitudes and perceptions about what works and what does not. Participants were inspired by the strong network among interfaith groups in Myanmar. They emphasized that mutual understanding and respect is key to scaling up advocacy work in HIV among FBOs. They said that this ex-

perience will be beneficial in guiding them in constructing their plan of action.

Participants stated that such programmes would create a sense of mission and responsibility to foster closer collaboration, mutual respect, and understanding between religions. They affirmed that our faith is grounded in the shared values of each religion, rather than in our differences. They highlighted the common feature among religions which is nobility of heart in serving the people. They committed to scaling up their advocacy efforts in responding to the epidemic and revitalising the existing interfaith network in Indonesia when they go back.

STRENGTHENING OF NETWORKS AND COLLABORATORS

Bhutan - India Advocacy Meeting

25 August – 9 September 2019/Bhutan and India

Dr. Ronald Lalthanmawia visited the Kingdom of Bhutan and met with leaders of the member councils in Bhutan. The objective of the visit was to explore possible collaboration with PLHIV networks and discuss with government officials and other UN agencies the possible contribution of CCA and its members in Bhutan.

Various discussions were held with different stakeholders for HIV and AIDS in Bhutan including with the Executive Director and staff of Lhak-Sam (Bhutan Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS – BNP+), staff of National AIDS Control Programme, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Bhutan, Outreach workers and members of Rainbow Bhutan and PLHIV in Bhutan.

The Executive Director of Lhak-Sam (Bhutan Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS – BNP+), Wangda Dorji shared information that stigma and discrimination are still very high for PLHIV in Bhutan. Many PLHIV do not register with the network for fear of disclosure and many have not accessed the ART which is available free of cost in Bhutan provided by the National AIDS Control Programme of the Ministry of Health, Bhutan.

Discussions were also held with staff of the organisations including programme officer, HR and Finance, Communication, Manager of Community Centre and outreach workers. The highlights of the challenges shared by them include:

1. Most of the PLHIV are farmers and housewives and due to stigma and discrimination, many people have to move from their villages. Those who are really sick are not able to get the treatment required.

2. Even though testing is freely available, all testing is done in government healthcare centres, many PLHIV still don't know their status. Most cases detected are through medical screening because of some other illness. There is a great need for Community-Based Screening of the general population.
3. The organisation started a community-based care centre to accommodate some PLHIV who are not able to stay in their own villages. The government has provided the land and facilities to establish such a centre. The land is currently used for orchard and brick manufacturing. Funding is required to have a clinic and accommodation facilities for PLHIVs.
4. There are very few health professionals trained in HIV treatment, care and support. The patients have to wait for many days in case the professional is not available.
5. There is a lack of awareness amongst the youth and the general population.

Meeting with National AIDS Control Programme in Bhutan

A meeting was held with the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) at the Gyaitseun Jetsun Pema Wangchuk Mother and Child Hospital, Community Health Department. The Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre (VCTC) was situated in the main hospital itself. The VCTC is well integrated with the hospital.

The NACP follow WHO guidelines for testing, treatment and Opportunistic Infection (OI) Management. Testing under the programme is available at the Basic Health Unit at village level. Confirmation is done at the National Centre for Disease Control

at the capital, Thimphu. ART is available at district hospitals and six hospitals have CD4 testing kits. Viral load testing is still a challenge and most of the time, the sample has to be sent to India.

One of the major concerns raised by the Programme Officer was that training is very minimal and only a few healthcare professionals are trained in HIV and AIDS management.

Outreach Workers and Members of Rainbow Bhutan

A discussion was held with the outreach workers and members of LGBTIQ+ known as Rainbow Bhutan. The movement is part of the initiative of Lhak-sam and focusses on the Key Affected Populations. With the support of professionals, the initiative made people aware, understand and support the LGBTIQ+. They also produce a lot of Information, Education and Communication materials. The outreach worker visits homes, hot spots and other places where the community usually gathers to bring awareness on HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections.

Advocacy in India

As part of the follow-up of the meetings held at Thimphu, Bhutan, a visit was made to New Delhi, India to discuss with the Delhi Network of Positives (DNP+) on strategies of collaboration with the Bhutan Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS (BNP+). A visit was also made to Christian Medical Association of India to discuss how training of healthcare professionals in Bhutan can be arranged. These possibilities were explored to strengthen the advocacy for PLHIV in Bhutan.

Even though HIV and AIDS is still a disease

entered in Bhutan lately, the increasing trend is a matter of concern. The response is effective but needs to be fast-tracked as it can cause a larger problem for the small Kingdom. The training programme on HIV and AIDS awareness, treatment, care and support has to scale up. There is also a need to involve NGOs and civil society to increase testing in order to increase case detection. A comprehensive care centre is needed as stigma and discrimination still persist in the community.

APPENDICES

List of CCA Programmes and Activities – 2019

No.	Programme/Activity	Date	No. of Participants	Reference Number as per 2019 Strategic Plan
1	CCA Officers' Meeting 2019, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	15–16 Jan 2019	3	GS.2
2	Advocacy Meeting with UNAIDS and UNICEF (ATCHAA) in Bangkok, Thailand	7–8 Feb 2019	2	PD.SP.4 / HIV 2.4.
3	Pilgrimage Team Visit to Burma-Thai Border in Mae Sot, Thailand	27 Feb– 3 Mar 2019	15	BP.1.1
4	Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP) – International Reference Group Meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand	3–7 Mar 2019	46	BP.1.1
5	CCA and ACISCA Executive Committee Meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand	19–20 Mar 2019		GS.3.2
6	Regional Skill Building Workshop for HIV and AIDS Facilitators (TOT) (ATCHAA) in Chiang Mai, Thailand	19–21 Mar 2019	22	PD.SP.2 / HIV.1.3
7	Consultation on Strengthening HIV and AIDS Advocacy and Networking (ATCHAA) in Chiang Mai, Thailand	22 Mar 2019	25	PD.SP.1 / HIV.2.2
8	Pastoral Solidarity Visit to Sri Lanka, Colombo, Sri Lanka	21–23 Apr 2019	1	BP.2
9	Meeting of CCA Foundation Thailand, Chiang Mai, Thailand	30 Apr 2019		GS.2
10	Pastoral Solidarity visit to Bahrain	3–7 May 2019	1	BP.2
11	Ecumenical Enablers' Training in Asia (EETA) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	13–15 May 2019	43	EF.3
12	International Consultation on Statelessness and Human Trafficking in Chiang Mai, Thailand	20–23 May 2019	41	PD.4.1
13	World Health Assembly 2019 and WCC Consultation on Universal Health Coverage in Geneva, Switzerland	20–28 May 2019	1	PD.SP.6 / HIV
14	Asian regional Workshop on the UN Human Rights System and Mechanisms: Application for Advocacy in Chiang Mai, Thailand	23–26 May 2019	21	PD.2.2

15	CCA General Assembly 2020 Preparatory Meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand	27–28 May 2019	7	GS 7
16	Advocacy at UN Women Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand	30 May 2019	3	PD.2.1
17	Asia Sunday 2019 (all of Asia)	2 Jun 2019		EF.6.1
18	AEWA Preparatory Meeting, Taipei, Taiwan	3 Jun 2019	4	EF.5.1
19	Staff Visit to Taiwan	1–6 Jun 2019	4	GS.3.1
20	Youth Motivation Programme (ATCHAA) in Kathmandu, Nepal	21–23 Jun 2019	37	PD.SP.2 / HIV.1
21	Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI) in Chiang Mai, Thailand	1–30 Jul 2019	24	EF.1
22	CCA Executive Committee Meeting 2019 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	13–18 Jul 2019	23	GS.2
23	Seminar on Prevention of Sexual Abuse against Children, Lahore, Pakistan	15 Jul 2019	40	BP.3.2
24	Youth Leadership Development Training in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	15–16 Jul 2019	45	EF.4.1
25	Youth Motivation Programme (ATCHAA) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia	15–17 Jul 2019	45	PD.SP.2 / HIV.1
26	Advocacy Training on Women's Rights, Raiwind, Pakistan	5 Jul 2019	20	BP.3.2
27	Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) – IX in Medan, Indonesia	5–10 August 2019	120	MU.3.
28	Ecumenical Learning Exchanges of Churches and Interfaith Organisations (Indonesia and Myanmar), Yangon, Myanmar	19–22 Aug 2019	20	HIV.2
29	Advocacy Meeting in Bhutan and India	25 Aug – 9 Sep 2019	1	HIV.3.
30	Youth Motivation Program (ATCHAA) in Cebu, Philippines	13–15 Sep 2019	27	HIV.1.
31	Sub-Regional Consultation on Ecumenical Women's Action against Violence, Dhaka, Bangladesh	4–6 Oct 2019	25	BP.3.1.
32	Solidarity Visit to the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh	7–8 Oct 2019	4	BP.1

33	Asia Regional Consultation on Child Rights Protection and Advocacy to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, Chiang Mai, Thailand	13–16 Oct 2019	38	PD 5.1.
34	Eco School on Water, Food, and Climate Justice, in Chiang Mai, Thailand	4–17 Nov 2019	28	BP 5.1.
35	The Ninth Global Energy Parliament, Chiang Mai, Thailand	5 Nov 2019	45	BP 5
36	Workshop on Asian Ecumenical Women Responding and Strengthening HIV & AIDS Advocacy in Hsinchu, Taiwan	19–21 Nov 2019	40	HIV 1.
37	CCA Officers' Meeting in Hsinchu, Taiwan	21 Nov 2019	3	GS 2.
38	Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly, Hsinchu, Taiwan	21–27 Nov 2019	250	EF 5.1.
39	Asia Regional Consultation on Evangelism and Missional witness in a Multi-religious Asia, Chiang Mai, Thailand	30 Nov–5 Dec 2019	40	MU 1
40	Training on Ecumenical Diaconia and Development, Chiang Mai, Thailand	4–8 Dec 2019	41	PD 6
41	WCC - Consultation on Support and Strengthening Christian Health Networks, Geneva, Switzerland	10–12 Dec 2019	1	PD 9

Report of the General Secretary to the CCA Executive Committee Meeting – 2019

This is the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee since the 14th General Assembly of CCA which was held in May 2015. As it was in the case of the Lebanon Executive Committee meeting last year, this year's meeting is taking place in a country that is unfamiliar to most of you. This is probably the first time that most of you are in Cambodia. Cambodia has been a forgotten area for several church leaders in Asia although CCA and the global ecumenical movement have been accompanying the people of Cambodia for many years, especially since the time of the prolonged civil war in the country and the post conflict period. This is a country where the global ecumenical movement including CCA has invested lots of time and resources for some time. However, this is another Asian country where less Asian church and ecumenical leaders visit or interact with churches in Cambodia. CCA has not been making any serious attempts for some time to make it known within Asia. It is in this context that our meeting as the leaders of the Asian ecumenical movement here in Phnom Penh is significant.

The history of Christianity and ecumenism in Cambodia has undergone many changes especially since the country started a new political beginning after the Paris Peace Agreement in 1992. I shall not give you a detailed account of the Church and Ecumenical situation in Cambodia in this report. However, I would encourage you to understand a little bit more about Christianity and Ecumenism in Cambodia, which can be found in a chapter of my book on Ecumenism in Asia, which I wrote some time ago. Although the time we spend

here is limited, I am sure that you will be able to understand the church and ecumenical situation at least in a limited way. We have many things to learn from the experiences of Cambodia and the Cambodians who have undergone traumatic experiences. This is a country where more than two million people were massacred. It is not easy to recognise from today's developed conditions in and around Phnom Penh that this country has a dark past and the people have a horrifying memory. This is the country in Asia where Christianity was completely wiped out during the dark days of brutal communist leader Pol Pot. The Church and Christianity in Cambodia had images of the colonial establishment. When the Cambodian communists came to power in 1975, one of their first actions was to dismantle the Roman Catholic cathedral in Phnom Penh, which they called "the Vietnamese church", but they saw it as the residue of the French colonialism. They tore down other church buildings all over the country. The Cambodian church we see here is a brand new Christianity which can be traced only after 1990 or more precisely the growth of Christianity started only after the Paris Peace Agreement of 1992. Today, the Church in Cambodia is growing and it has become a missionary battlefield. At the same time, there exists more disunity or competition among the Christians. What we see in Cambodia is a highly disunited church. The ecumenical movement in the country is also divided although both CCA and WCC jointly supported the churches and a national ecumenical council in Cambodia. The meeting of the CCA Executive Committee in Cambodia now, a first in the history

of CCA, is very important. It is a timely action by CCA now as we try to understand the Cambodian Church and Ecumenism and find ways to continue ecumenical accompaniment in Cambodia in the new context. I am sure that our presence and interactions with Cambodian churches will make a difference.

Since our meeting last year in Beirut, our region has undergone many changes and experienced several traumatic experiences, with Sri Lanka experiencing the most tragic situation. The terrorist acts that took place in Sri Lanka and the murder of more than 250 churchgoers, tourists, and other civilians in on Easter Sunday is a reminder that Asia is now the world's leading site of religious extremism. The undercurrents of such a tragedy is not an isolated event. Sri Lanka is not the only Asian country that faces such a crisis. Other countries in Asia too have been hit in recent years especially after the gradual demise of the Islamic state in the Middle East. The presence and active involvement of IS cadres and supporters are increasingly visible in Asian countries such as in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and in China's complex Xinjiang region as well as the Central Asian Republics. Peace and security in Asia is threatened by global and local terrorist organisations with different strategies. Today's Asia is perhaps the world's most terrorism-torn region. State repression against an ethnic or religious minority has also triggered in several places. Asia confronts a serious and growing terrorism-related challenge. These happenings raise a question about the vulnerability of Asians amidst development and progress and the future of peace and security. We are often proud of the way Asia has progressed in many areas over

the past three decades. It is a fact that the economic development and technological innovation rapidly transformed Asia. However, despite these developments we Asians remain caught in protracted cycles of conflict and violence. Such situations only contribute to underdevelopment, poor governance, and instability. In the midst of increasing political gridlock and communal tensions, several Asian countries face much more severe constraints to economic recovery and development. A large number of Asians are forced to live in the midst of gun battles, ethnic conflicts, violence, communal tensions and political chaos. All these have serious economic repercussions in several Asian countries. Political analysts and observers warn that the region's leaders must either address the problem at its source or prepare for more bloodshed in the coming years and decades. If left unaddressed, this scourge could become the defining crisis of the century for Asia.

All these circumstances warrant us to think about being the Church in the midst of emerging Asian realities and respond to such situations as a community of the ambassadors of Christ.

Being the Church in Accompaniment with Our Co-Pilgrims in Asia

The theme we have chosen this year for our programme thrust is 'Being the Church in Accompaniment with Our Co-Pilgrims in Asia'. As we believe that the Church is the people of God filled with the divine presence of God, the members of the Church are called to be partners in fulfilling God's mission and to commit themselves to the mission of gospel saturation. The struggle for attaining the goal of peace with justice is the essence of the message of the gospel. At this crucial time in Asia, as Asian

ecumenical family members, how do we find relevance to the value and message of the Gospel? In order to attain the goal of Gospel saturation, the people of God in Asia are called to be partners and companions with all God's people who are co-pilgrims. The word pilgrim and pilgrimage have become more prominent in the ecumenical movement especially since WCC launched a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace programme. The concept of pilgrimage has different contextual meanings in the world and in Asia too. I tried to articulate this in a small book I wrote and published in 2015. A pilgrim is not a lonely wanderer on the planet, nor is a pilgrimage merely a concept of performing a ritual, or commemoration; it is a search for truth, connection, transformation, participation, accompaniment and a path leading to peace with justice. In Asia's diverse pluralistic cultural and religious contexts, pilgrimage has elaborate significance and spiritual values. In Asian contexts, pilgrimage is also a journey of search, especially one of exalted purpose or moral significance. In various religious traditions in Asia, pilgrimage is an ongoing process that enables transformation through deep spiritual experiences. The pilgrimage in Asia also has integral components of peace building and nurturing harmony together with our co-pilgrims. It is in this context that we need to find the relevance of being a Church in accompaniment with our co-pilgrims in Asia.

The Church has a responsibility to equip and prepare all members of the Church to be co-pilgrims in God's mission. The Church in Asia is called to participate in God's mission of a spiritual journey of pilgrimage in the struggle for peace with justice. However, the reality is that more and more people are wary of institutional forms of the Church for many reasons.

The emerging and pressing need is to learn how to be a catalyst as the Church in Asia, how to be a good partner and companion with our co-pilgrims in a diverse cultural and religious context in Asia in the spirit of Christ's love. As a body of Christ, the Church in Asia today is called to witness Christ in the midst of increasing painful realities of fragmented communities in Asia. The activities being carried out in 2019 is the fourth part of the original five years strategic programme plan developed and adopted by the CCA Executive Committee for 2016-2020. A wide range of activities are planned and being implemented.

As we continue our journey of implementing all these programmes, the thought that constantly reminds us is that we stand at the threshold of a new era in humanity's journey towards its destiny. There are many signs all around us that remind us of the new challenges we come across in all areas of life in Asia. The emerging contexts and situations in Asia call for a new way of fulfilling the mission necessary for a new way of being the Church. This is because the mission determines the being of the Church. The Church is the community of disciples that has received the Good News. The Church is called to communicate, accompany and journey together in the world to share the Good News. In other words, the Church is both conditioned by Christ and conditioned by the world. The first Christian community communicated and manifested its faith in Christ not so much through its doctrinal formulations as by its being a community of love and sharing. However, we Asians have not sufficiently manifested to our brothers and sisters of other faiths and ideologies this specific Christian image of sharing and caring. We still present Christ as a religious founder and Christianity as the supreme

religion. This is what is happening in Cambodia, Laos and/or Nepal today. As a result, we are either tolerated or persecuted as another religion depending on the attitude of the majority religions wherever we live.

The CCA tried to respond to emerging Asian issues and accompanied its member churches and councils that were either caught up in conflict situations or needed support on specific occasions. On behalf of CCA, the General Secretary responded to number of emerging Asian issues during the past one year since we met in Lebanon. The wide variety of issues addressed and responded by CCA are clear indications of the fragility of Asia's crisis situations and ecumenical responses warranted. The issues addressed range from terrorism, human trafficking, violation of human rights and minority rights, freedom of religion, indiscriminate shootings at worship place, and racial discrimination. The ongoing conflict situation in the Philippines is a matter of serious concern. The churches in Asia are faithfully responding to several pertinent issues in their respective contexts as part of their prophetic witness. In this situation, we find relevance of being the Church in accompanying people and communities who struggle for justice and peace in Asia. The programmes we are focusing in the current year touch upon many aspects and areas of Asian situations.

In 2018, CCA initiated, organised and facilitated 38 programmes. In addition to this, in the first half of 2019 CCA organised and facilitated 19 programmes. Preparations are underway for another 18 programmes including certain major events such as the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS-IX) which will be held in Medan, Indonesia

from 5 to 10 August 2019 with 100 Asian theologians, and the AEWA in Hsinchu, Taiwan from 21 to 27 November 2019 with the participation of 250 women from all over Asia. All these efforts of CCA really help us to revitalise the Asian ecumenical movement while reflecting on being the Church in Asia.

Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace Asia Focus

The programme of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP) initiated by the WCC has its focus on Asia in 2019. CCA facilitated the meeting of the PJP International Reference Group and the Theological Working Group which was held in Chiang Mai during the first week of March 2019. The members of the Reference Group together with several staff of WCC joined the Pilgrimage Team Visits organised to Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand-Myanmar border prior to the Chiang Mai meeting. There were three other visits originally planned and scheduled to take place to the Philippines, Japan and South Korea. Although CCA representatives did not directly participate in these PTVs, CCA facilitated a planning meeting with the General Secretaries of 9 NCCs in Asia which enabled better coordination and organisation of each PTV that already took place. The week long meetings held at the CCA headquarters was focused on peace related issues in Asia as well as in other parts of the world. The role of CCA in organising and facilitating PJP Reference Group meeting, an Interfaith Worship on Peace organised in conjunction with the PJP meeting and the launching of the Ecumenical Water Network Lenten campaign were appreciated and recognised by the members of the international reference group.

As this year's PJP regional focus is on Asia, the WCC's various programme desks and units will organise programmes with a focus on Asia. The leadership of WCC asked all its programme staff to implement such programmes in Asia only in collaboration with CCA, and most of them now work together with CCA in implementing programmes in Asia. At least six programmes have been scheduled this year as joint programmes in areas such as stateless people, ecology, human rights advocacy, diakonia and sustainable development, evangelism, dignity of children and communication training. A meeting of the WCC and eight REO General Secretaries held recently adopted new guidelines for strengthening WCC and REO relations and joint actions. One of the provisions made in these guidelines is to ensure the participation of respective REO from the beginning of the planning stage itself. This needs to be seen as a positive indicator. This is yet another way of strengthening and ensuring the coherence of one ecumenical movement.

Asia Sunday: Stateless and Trafficked People our Co-Pilgrims

The focus of this year's Asia Sunday was on 'Stateless and Trafficked People in Asia: Our Co-Pilgrims' and was yet another opportunity to reflect loudly about one of the most serious contemporary issues faced by humanity.

Statelessness and human trafficking are often intertwined, and are grave and widespread human rights problems of the contemporary world. Both issues have even been linked through the common claim that statelessness puts a person at greater risk of becoming a victim of trafficking. Millions of Asians, including women and children, are at risk of being stateless and trafficked as migrant workers both within

and outside the region. Stateless people exist in most Asian countries. Forty per cent of the identified stateless population of the world live in Asia and the Pacific. In South East Asia and South Asia, discriminatory laws, policies and practices on the basis of gender, ethnicity, race and religion have significantly contributed to statelessness. We hear the stories of the plight of the Rohingyas in Myanmar who are the most vulnerable stateless people in Asia. Close to one million hill tribe people in Thailand lack Thai citizenship as they are unable to provide documentation of their birthplace or parentage. Children among the two million Myanmar refugees or economic migrants in Thailand are ineligible for Thai or Myanmar citizenship, rendering them stateless. Four million people in the Assam state of India have been effectively rendered stateless by the Indian government's recent actions, since the Indian government will no longer consider them Indian citizens as they are not included in the draft list of the National Register of Citizens (NRC). Persons of Chinese descent have also faced restrictions on citizenship rights in Indonesia, Korea, and Vietnam. Tens of thousands of undocumented children of migrant parents in Sabah in eastern Malaysia are believed to be stateless and extremely vulnerable, particularly those whose parents have been deported. Over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal are among the most protracted situations of statelessness. In Cambodia, since being forcibly displaced during the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s, many ethnic Cambodians have lived in Vietnam for generations, and they have lost their documentation or any proof of having lived in Cambodia. It is in this context that CCA tried to mobilise and sensitise the Asian churches in various ways of advocacy.

An international consultation was organised in May 2019 together with the WCC. Focusing on the plight of the stateless people through this year's Asia Sunday was another opportunity. We have received reports from several churches about the observance of Asia Sunday in their respective congregations and NCCs.

Concerns of Asian Diaspora in the Arabian Gulf

We have been trying to address the concerns of the Asian Diaspora in the Arabian Gulf for some time. As a follow-up of earlier solidarity and pastoral visits, we organised a Consultation on Asian Diaspora in the Arabian Gulf which was held in Bangkok in November 2018. The consultation was attended by Asian church representatives together with about 20 representatives of Asian Diaspora from the Arabian Gulf countries such as Kuwait, Bahrain, Muscat, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Rasel Khaima, and Fujira. The plight of the migrants and migrant workers in the Arabian Gulf needs to be addressed with an urgent priority in the changing situation in the Gulf countries. Asian churches will also have to play important roles in their respective countries. The representatives of Asian churches in the Gulf region have been repeatedly asking CCA to take a lead in initiating an appropriate programme in the Gulf region for the Asian Diaspora. I recently discussed this issue with the General Secretaries of the Middle East Council of Churches and the All African Conference of Churches during the meeting of the WCC and REO General Secretaries. CCA needs to follow-up on this issue in the near future.

Conciliar Fellowships in Crisis; Lack of Good Governance?

Traditionally, ecumenism emphasizes the unity of the faithful towards the final goal of theological and ecclesial convergence. However, the emphasis and the interpretations have changed over the years. Today ecumenism has a much wider meaning but ecumenism still mainly addresses, in classical terms, unity of the churches. The visible expression of such unity is reflected through the work of the national council of churches. Asia has 17 NCCs, but several of them are really in crisis. There are various reasons and factors for such crisis and often there are efforts to overcome such crisis. Meanwhile, other models or descriptions of ecumenism emerge. Receptive Ecumenism is one such trend that accepts a greater degree of difference between Christians and their respective churches. Instead of focusing on areas of potential convergence between the churches, proponents of receptive ecumenism say that ecumenism at the present needs to focus on the individual growth and learning of each church tradition in dialogue with others. This argument of individual churches and bilateral collaboration instead of multilateral approach of ensuring unity has many negative impacts as such initiatives often promote denominationalism and ignore ecumenical commitments. There are several examples we can take from Asian situations as such attempts are often aimed at narrow personal and political gains.

The goal of traditional church centered ecumenism, visible unity through theological and ecclesial convergence, is often put aside in favour of an ecumenism of bilateral collaboration in the name of denominationalism or reviving the old mission board connections through Western mission agencies now becoming more active in Asia. What the Asian churches need at

this juncture is self-examination to find a way of mutual enrichment. This includes a deepening of mutual understanding and appreciation between the churches, but more fundamentally it should aim at the maturing and growth within each church in the process of real receptive learning between churches.

Several member churches and NCCs are in disarray now due to internal conflicts, inter-church rivalries, personal conflicts and leadership crisis, lack of accountability and transparency as well as corruption. Whether it is in poor countries or economically advanced countries, the level of corruption taking place in Asian churches is increasing. The only difference probably is regarding the amount of church money given by the faithful to the churches that is used for corrupt practices or how the church property is misappropriated by a poor church or a rich church through the deals by the church leadership. The reputation of several churches in Asia is under stake as there is no stewardship or there is no Code of Conduct in churches to deal with such issues. It is a shame for Asian churches as a whole that some of CCA member churches are spending millions of dollars for court litigation. In this meeting we need to deal with developing a Code of Conduct principle for CCA. This could be applicable eventually to member churches and councils. We are in discussion with the Mission 21 in Switzerland to get support for an Asia wide project to help CCA member churches and councils to develop a Code of Conduct and Good Governance. I know that this may not be a popular programme or proposal as far as some churches and their leaders are concerned but it is essential to uphold the credibility of Asian churches, for which CCA needs to initiate and facilitate certain programmes.

Where Are We Heading to? Financial Sustainability and the Future

In my report last year, I mentioned about the issues related to income development and financial sustainability as an urgent priority. The dwindling financial situation of CCA needs to be considered as an urgent priority. As I reported last time, there are several positive and encouraging responses from the member churches in terms of covering expenses of hosting programmes. In last year's General Secretariat's (GS) report there were several examples of such generous support received. You will see the visible evidence of such generous support in the audited statement and financial report; we received a total of U.S \$326,240 in 2018 from Asian churches for various programmes. This was possible due to our consistent efforts of convincing our member churches about the need for their increased support to CCA. We are expecting support from several other churches in 2019 too. For example, two major forthcoming events of CCA, CATS and AEWA will be supported by churches in Indonesia and Taiwan. The board and lodging of 100-120 participants of CATS-IX and other local expenses will be covered by a Pentecostal church GBI in Indonesia which is a member church of PGI, and it is through PGI that this church is relating with CCA. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan will host the AEWA and pay for all local expenses of 250 participants of AEWA which will be held in November 2019. In this context, I reiterate the disappointment I expressed earlier that several economically well-off churches in Asia's rich countries and councils are still not generous enough to support CCA by way of adding any additional membership contributions or programme support contributions.

Here I would like to report again to the Executive Committee and alert them about the shrinking financial support to CCA from our European and North American church partners. I approached and tried to convince some of CCA's traditional ecumenical partners in Europe for an increased contribution. I made a special appeal for increase in their regular contributions. As you know, the income from the international ecumenical partners is not increasing in recent years but decreasing annually. They have given us sufficient indications much earlier that the time has come for CCA to stand on its own feet. It has become increasingly evident that the financial contributions from the non-Asian partners will be drastically reduced in coming years. Let me alert you again, all the responsible Asian church leaders, that it is high time for CCA to look for sustainable income development from other reliable and stable sources. I would like to reiterate my earlier proposal that the property development or income development sources together with the CCA headquarters building project need to be a priority for CCA, and it should be the highest priority for CCA to take a proper decision at the earliest. The more we wait, the more our available money will be devalued.

An Update on the Proposed Building Project and Land Development

Once I mentioned about a comment by Rev D.T. Niles who said "we have no Switzerland in Asia". What he meant was that Asia has no neutral country for EACC headquarters to be located and operate without any fear or hindrance or interventions. Six decades later, it is being proved that CCA can anchor its base only in very few countries in Asia, but with many restrictions or hurdles. CCA was expelled from

Singapore once and then relocated and operated from four countries. Then it was under one roof in Hong Kong, but found it more difficult to be sustainable, hence CCA came back to Thailand, where CCA had its headquarters located for more than a decade in 1960s and early 1970's. The difference between then and now is that there had been a greater sense of ownership demonstrated by CCA's member church in Thailand, the CCT when CCA housed its headquarters at 25 Papuan Road in Bangkok along with CCT headquarters. Now CCA is just a client availing services at the Payap University campus. The question is how long we will continue like this. Ever since CCA moved to Chiang Mai, every General Secretary tried to do something at the beginning and then left the office without taking any responsible decisions. As a result, time passed and the fund set aside from the sale proceeds in 2006 designated for building project has diminished in value.

Let me recall the earlier decisions of the CCA Executive Committee with regard to the building project and the land development project. The utilisation of the land owned by the CCA located in Chiang Mai has been a focus for discussion and debate for several years. At different times the General Committee of CCA decided to sell the land, but later the CCA Executive Committee decided that the sale of the land be put on hold for the moment and a mandate had been given to draw up a plan that enabled calculating the cost of the entire process. On another occasion the decision was to look for an option to buy another piece of land where the height restrictions did not apply and construct more floors with a possibility for better income generation potential for the CCA. The Finance Committee and the Executive

Committee received and supported the feasibility report prepared by an architect and appraiser. The proposal was accepted in principle and decided to implement the proposals: using two (2) plots out of the total of four (4) plots utilising 20,000 square feet to be divided for the purposes of CCA office space, library, meeting rooms, staff accommodation and rental accommodation as well as to develop an Asian Ecumenical Institute, a training centre with appropriate conference facilities. Meanwhile, the subcommittee which is mandated to look into three other options made new proposals. The Executive Committee in its meeting held in Beirut in July 2018 decided to purchase a school building – Lana School property. However, this decision was not implemented after considering various factors.

The post-2018 Executive Committee meeting developments in this regard can be summarised as follows:

1. A two-member team of engineers of the Habitat Technology Group in India visited the Lana school site and examined the conditions of the existing school building. After an inspection and evaluation, the engineers reported their observations:
2. The engineers found that the Lana school building was more than 50 years old- although the owner of the property initially told CCA Ex-Com member Ms. Supaporn that the school building was only 30 years old. The engineers noticed in the approved master plan of the building that the permission for constructing the building was granted by the authorities in early 1960s.
3. The construction of the pillars and beams were not strong enough to bear the construction of any further additional floors or rooms.
4. The existing buildings on the site were too old and constructed with less-advanced technologies and they were now in very bad conditions; taking into consideration the present condition of the building and the expenses needed for refurbishing, the buildings had only zero value and the price negotiated should only be for the land.
5. In this situation, as requested by the General Secretary, Ms. Supaporn informed the Lana School owner that CCA was not interested in negotiating for the purchase of the school property.
6. Ms. Supaporn arranged another possibility to buy a property, a hotel owned by a member of the CCT. The Habitat Group Engineers visited the place and examined the building and the property. It was found that we would need more additional constructions to meet all the required needs.
7. The Habitat Group engineers, during their stay in Chiang Mai, visited CCA property site and advised constructing buildings on CCA land as a more practical solution rather than acquiring other existing properties. The location and accessibility to the property provided by roads on three sides were considered advantageous.

Now the questions before this Executive Committee include how to proceed further. Decisions to be taken at this Executive Committee:

- In which direction must the building project be followed up?

- Must an attempt be made to relocate CCA headquarters to Bangkok or another country?
- Should the CCA headquarters be located in Chiang Mai itself? And if yes, should it be in a rented place or in a building constructed on its own land?

I am hoping that the agenda item set apart will help us to discuss further on this matter and take a concrete decision with better clarity.

15th General Assembly of CCA: 2020

The 15th General Assembly is scheduled to take place in 2020. We have already made certain decisions in the Executive Committee meeting held in 2018 with regard to the venue and also formed an Assembly Planning Committee (APC). The APC met once and initiated a preparatory process. More details will be shared later for separate discussions and decisions. The APC undertook a detailed brain storming exercise to make concrete proposals before the Executive Committee regarding a suitable theme. The APC discussion was centred on the theme Reconciliation, Renewal and Restoration. The APC finally filtered the themes from several proposals and considered:

- "God, Restore us to Yourself and Renew the Creation"
- "God, Restore us to Your Path and Renew the Creation"
- "God, Restore Us in Your Spirit and Renew the Creation"

After much discussion and deliberations, the APC came up with the final proposed theme to be presented at the Executive Committee meeting to be held in July 2019:

"God, Renew Us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation" (Ps.104:30, Lam.5:21).

This has resemblance with the themes of two other events of CCA this year. The theme of the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), which will be held in Medan, Indonesia from 5 to 10 August 2019 is "Reconciliation, Renewal and Restoration: Divine Indicative and Human Imperative". The AEWA theme will be "Arise, be Awake to Reconcile, Renew and Restore the Creation". When the proposed theme of the Assembly is compared with these two themes, one may feel that an important component, 'Reconciliation' is missing in the proposed theme for the Assembly. As the Executive Committee is going to make the final decision on the theme of the next Assembly, it would be better to discuss the thematic emphasis in a more in-depth way and ensure better clarity.

The proposed theme is in the form of a prayer; it is more with a theocentric emphasis and the overall missiological emphasis is also articulated in this prayer. We normally approach mission and missiology from the perspective of history of missions or from that of the Great Commission texts, interpreting them in a narrow sense as a call to baptise everyone. Today, we realize that the welfare of the whole creation is the object of the Christian mission. The Church is like the leaven meant to facilitate the transformation of the world. The mission in which we are called to participate is to be aimed at reconciling, renewing, restoring and transforming the world and the entire creation. The Christian understanding of the Church and its mission is deeply rooted in God's grand design for all creation. God's purpose in creation was hindered by human disobedience which ultimately affected and

spoiled the relationship between God, human beings and created disorder. We are alienated not only from one another, but also from the land that sustains us. Our relations are estranged, ecosystems are increasingly damaged, and we are responsible for degrading the creation. God reconciles, renews and restores everything distorted from their original state into a peaceful, life-promoting relationship with one another. Since human beings are incarnated in material, bodily existence, we are necessarily interdependent on plants and animals, land and sea, heaven and earth. The good news is that redemption is cosmic. The process of reconciling, renewing and restoring is God's way of ensuring the fullness of life of all God's creation. Our faith is in God who reconciles all things in heaven and on earth. What we need to emphasize and convey in a theme of CCA Assembly is a message that will be fully Asian and authentically Christian.

With regard to the venue, we agreed in principle for the 15th General Assembly to be held in Jabalpur, India as the first option. During my further enquiry and discussions with Churches in northern parts of India and with the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), I discovered certain practical difficulties related to flight connections from international airports to Jabalpur where the delegates will have to travel by domestic flights. Meanwhile certain other proposals were also made for Kerala, the southernmost state of India, as a possible option to hold the next Assembly, if the Assembly will be held in India. The APC during its meeting in May looked into other options either in Bangkok or in Chiang Mai. When we shared this proposal with others we were reminded of the fact that CCA had three General Assemblies already in Thailand; two in Bang-

kok and one in Chiang Mai. Whether it is in India or Thailand or anywhere else, we need to ensure more sense of ownership by the churches and also a certain level of financial contribution as well as expenses in terms of covering the Assembly costs including travel subsidies at the minimum level. We have worked out certain details based on the available information, which will be presented later. Various factors need to be considered for us to make a proper decision.

CCA Member Churches and Membership Shifting

The geographical area of CCA's membership has been growing for some time. CCA presently has its members starting in West Asia from Iran to Japan in East Asia, and Nepal in the North to New Zealand in the South. However, there are interests expressed by churches from other countries to become members of CCA. The Anglican Church in Mauritius has contacted us and also sent a participant to attend last year's AEI. Leadership of a Church in Mongolia is in contact with us and also certain churches from the Central Asian Republics such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. At the same time certain churches in Australia and New Zealand have become members of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC). The notable fact here is that CCA was never informed of such developments where a member church was seeking membership in another Regional Ecumenical Organisation. Sometimes this creates some confusion with regard to their regional identity. A few years ago, Gereja Kristen Injili di Tanah Papua (GKI), a CCA member church in West Papua became a member of PCC, and the same church is still a member of CCA. However, in international gatherings GKI identifies its affiliations with the Pacific

region. In several churches, only the leadership knows which direction the church is moving and how it relates with different levels in the ecumenical movement. What Noam Chomsky once commented on another issue is relevant in this context too: "The general population doesn't know what's happening, and it doesn't even know that it doesn't know!"

Recently the national contact person W.V. (Bill) Robinson wrote to us on behalf of The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) New Zealand saying, "We are a relatively small group and need to be careful of the use of our resources and finances. We also note that CCA has grown into a vibrant and active body within Asia so our assistance and backing is no longer needed." As you know, the Malaysian Methodist Church informed CCA just prior to the 14th General Assembly in 2015 that the Methodist Church in Malaysia had withdrawn from CCA's fellowship. The reason at that time was probably that the church was concerned about the fraudulent involvement discovered by the investigation team of CCA about the then General Committee member of CCA from Malaysia who was also the Secretary of the Methodist Church in Malaysia. Out of a total of 100 member churches of CCA, we now have only 98 members in our membership register, but some of them are rather non-active members or not responding to our correspondences. We have contacted all member churches again recently to seek certain statistics about each church that are needed for careful decision-making on seat allocation.

New Membership Applications and Guidelines for Processing

As several other churches in Asia are seeking membership in CCA, we need to think

and discuss more about CCA's membership application policies. As far as seeking new membership in CCA is concerned, we have only a very informal or loose policy for admitting a new member church in CCA. As per the CCA Constitution, in order to qualify for membership a church must express its agreement with the basis of the WCC (Article I of the Constitution): The CCA is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

CCA is not an organisation dealing with specific countries or nationalities or disputes between nations. CCA does not give preferential treatment in accepting the views and suggestions made by its member churches or councils in terms of its size. However, the member churches should have a clarity on its member churches and councils and CCA should have a clear policy and guidelines for accepting member churches or councils. It is more appropriate now for CCA to adopt a policy guideline for receiving and accepting new members in future. The acceptance of any new members in CCA fellowship should be based on a commonly accepted guideline and systematic process. As it is, there are no guidelines except certain requirements outlined in the CCA constitution; we don't even have a membership application form for the applicant church to spell out the details. We have included an item on the agenda of this meeting to discuss about the guidelines for membership in CCA. A process to develop proper guidelines will help CCA to handle new membership applications in a professional way and introduce and recommend the applicant church/ council at the General Assembly.

We need to start the process now as there are certain churches from Japan, Vietnam, Mongolia and Mauritius that have already expressed interest to join CCA and proper decisions need to be made at the forthcoming assembly.

Challenges Ahead of Us

As we are now approaching the next General Assembly and completing the assigned mandates of the current Executive Committee, we need to make an assessment about the ongoing challenges ahead of CCA. There are number of important issues to be addressed still or aimed to be achieved.

(A) Human Resources: CCA Needs More Committed Personnel to Perform Tasks

Commitment to work and committed staff and the level of their enthusiasm are the real strength of an organisation or institution in order to perform tasks and mandates at a workplace. The enthusiasm and commitment of a person towards the goals, mission, and vision of any organisation would normally be expected. Our ecumenical tasks are achieved by perseverance, hard work, and dedication. All these qualities don't just show up in a day. From my experiences during the past four years as I tried to attain certain goals of CCA through a marathon race, I realized that the challenges are enormous! Finance is not the only factor that hinders CCA from performing a better task. Commitments and committed human resources to undertake the responsibilities and implement them with certain level of motivation and ecumenical commitment is the most needed factor. The church and the ecumenical movement as a whole in many places face this as a major problem, so as in CCA. Our experiences show this as a

major challenge for CCA now. At the same time, I am glad that the young talents we identify from Asia are hopeful signs for the future of Asian ecumenical movement. Some of the young interns we recruited or other young staff demonstrate their commitment. Their passion and commitment for working in the ecumenical movement have been evident in various ways. What we need is consistent efforts and strategies to identify more young talents in Asia and nurture their enthusiasm, recognise their commitment and allow them to grow and blossom in a way to use their skills for the future of the ecumenical movement. If such efforts are not taken, the ecumenical movement in Asia will have to face a paralysis in the near future as we face a situation of shrinking human resources and leadership in church and ecumenical movement.

(B) Communication: CCA Needs New Strategies

A good communication system in this highly sophisticated digitalised world is crucial in enabling the CCA to present its work in a coherent way, and encourage the constituencies especially to engage the young generation with CCA's work in areas or topics in which they are interested. CCA has not evolved a systematic communication strategy yet. The CCA website www.cca.org.hk and the Facebook page serve as the main CCA communication channels. The CCA News releases we publish occasionally, are reaching a fairly wide audience. We have reached a target group of more than 5000 regular subscribers now from zero at the end of 2015 since we developed a new website and introduced a Mail Chimp distribution system. Sometimes, our News Releases receive 2000 to 3000 hits within the first one or two hours after they are

posted on the CCA website. Although we do print and publish certain reports and booklets, we have not had any printed publications for some time. The main reason is that we don't have a communication staff or a staff with expertise in editing and publishing. We advertised for the position of a copy editor and communication coordinator, but we could not recruit any suitable staff so far.

We are now in the process of organising a capacity-building training for a selected group of 20-25 young people who are interested in the field of communication. A plan has been worked out during my last visit to WCC to organise this training with external professional facilitation. This will be fully supported and sponsored by WCC's Communication department. The idea is to build up an ecumenical network of communicators in Asia with at least one representative from each country or region in Asia's CCA constituency.

(c) Towards a Consensus Model of Decision-Making in CCA

There are lesser disputes and/or less controversial issues that we normally deal among ourselves as a governing board. This is a positive and healthy trend as far as CCA's future is concerned. I am fully aware of the past experiences and how much it was internally polarised and how it affected CCA's growth and witness. Today, we experience a more fruitful collaboration and peaceful atmosphere in our decision-making process with mutual support. This development and the atmosphere we experience now is a positive sign as far as CCA's future is concerned and the legacy we will pass on to the future and the new generation of ecumenists. The churches in many parts of the world, especially the global ecumenical movement, learnt many

positive aspects from the consensus model of decision-making. CCA has not yet initiated such process or made any attempt to introduce the decision-making through a consensus model. The WCC has been following the consensus decision-making for the past two decades and those have been helpful in many ways. It is important that we initiate such a consensus model of decision-making in CCA, at least to start with it at the 15th General Assembly. We have expert assistance within ourselves and we need to avail such expertise to develop a consensus model of decision-making in CCA. Rev. Terence Corkin is one of the best known experts of facilitating the consensus decision-making process and I suggest that we avail his expertise from the Assembly and beyond the Assembly for some time to train the incoming governing board members. We need to make a formal decision about the follow-up and the way we would like to move forward.

(D) Organisational Evaluation of CCA

A proper assessment and evaluation of the work and activities of any organisation and institution is essential for understanding the strength and weakness of the concerned body. CCA undertook a major evaluation almost a decade ago. The evaluation process at that time lasted for more than two years and the final report was presented to the 2010 General Assembly of CCA. The follow-up of that evaluation resulted in the amendment of the Constitution adopted at the General Assembly in 2015 and subsequently introducing a new programme structure in the post Jakarta Assembly period. Our main funding partner, Bread for the World (BfdW), made a proposal during the time of the current funding cycle that CCA should make provisions for another round of evaluation. We

have been in consultation with BfdW and the Church of Sweden about the evaluation process. We have now worked out a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the proposed evaluation and also identified certain names for considering to select as members of the evaluation team. The ToR also made provisions for representatives or reference persons from CCA to facilitate the evaluation process. The idea is that an evaluation report be presented to the next General Assembly through the Executive Committee. More details will be shared at a later stage for discussion and action. We need to anticipate certain challenges before us about the implementation of the recommendations in an effective way in future.

As We Move Forward and Continue Our Ecumenical Journey...

CCA has completed 62 years of its ecumenical journey this year. In Asia's multi-cultural context, CCA has completed one full circle of its life span and this is the second year of the second life cycle. The member churches and councils in Asia come from different traditions. There are CCA member churches as old as Christianity itself and there are also new churches only two or three decades old. On the whole, our image in Asia is still as a foreign religion, and a coloniser's religion imported as part of colonialism. The general perception of Christianity in Indochina countries is the typical example for that as they commonly perceived that the "Cross and the Sword" marched to these countries side by side with the French colonialists. In this situation, we need to project a new image, which should be the classical image of the Church, a community of love and sharing; a community that embraces all God's people; a community that express-

es solidarity with our fellow travellers in our communities although they are adherents of other religions. It is not an easy task in today's Asian contexts to perform our tasks in most countries, but God's divine guidance is our source of strength. God's communication with human beings was not in abstract terms, but he entered into the life and cultures of the people. He fully became one with the people (Hebrew 2:17). The Church, being the sacrament of Christ, has to be fully integrated into the people to whom the Church sent in mission. The Church in Asia must become more an animating than a dominating centre. The presence of the Church in Asia should be all pervading and all permeating. The Church in Asia must make its presence felt in a way that transforms and creates communion among all God's people. The role of the national councils, especially CCA as a fellowship of churches and councils across Asia, has a more specific role to make the presence felt in every sphere of life in all possible ways. Reading the signs of the times enjoins us with the duty to reformulate the meaning and relevance of our witness and journey together in Asia. As we move forward and continue our ecumenical journey in Asia, let us pray and strive to be obedient in responding to God's call.

Mathews George Chunakara

General Secretary, CCA

15.07.2019

ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	All African Conference of Churches
AANDRoC	Asia Advocacy Network on Dignity and Rights of Children
ACISCA	Association of the Christian Institutes for Social Concerns in Asia
ACWC	Asian Church Women's Conference
ADRC	Asian Diaspora Regional Council
AEA	Asia Evangelical Alliance
AEF	Asian Ecumenical Fellowship
AEI	Asian Ecumenical Institute
AEWA	Asian Ecumenical Women's Assembly
AFP	Armed Forces in the Philippines
APC	Assembly Planning Committee
ARCSEA	Association for the Rights of Children in South East Asia
ART	Anti-retroviral Therapy
ATCHAA	Action Together in Combating HIV & AIDS in Asia
BARM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BfdW	Bread for the World
BHU	Basic Health Unit
BM	Balay Malingkawasnon
CAM	CCT AIDS Ministry
CARD	Christian Agency for Rural Development
CATS	Congress of Asian Theologians
CCA	Christian Conference of Asia
CCC	Churches' Commitment to Children
CCDB	Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh
CCT	Church of Christ in Thailand
CEPPA	Collaborative Ecumenical Partnership in Programmes and Activities

CIM	Christian Institute of Management
CMAI	Christian Medical Association of India
COSO	Committee of Sponsoring Organisations
CSE	Child Sexual Abuse
CSI	Church of South India
CTG	Communist Terrorist Groups
DEPDC ties Centre	Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communi-
DND	Department of National Defense
EACC	East Asia Christian Conference
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution and Trafficking
EETA	Ecumenical Enablers' Training in Asia
EFK	Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EWAAV	Ecumenical Women's Action against Violence
EWN	Ecumenical Water Network
FABC	Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conferences
FBO	Faith Based Organisations
FLC	Fellowship of the Least Coin
GBI	Gereja Bethel Indonesia
GEP	Global Energy Parliament
GKI	Gereja Kristen Injili di Tanah Papua
GMIST	Gereja Masehi Injili Sengihe Talaud
GMO	Genetically modified organism
GS	General Secretariat
HKBP	Huria Kristen Batak Protestan
ICFLC	International Committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin

IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IEMILIF	Iglesia Evangelica Metodista En Las Islas Filipinas
INGO	International non-governmental organisations
KAP	Key Affected Populations
KCC	Kampuchea Christian Council
KKKP	Kalipunan ng Kristiyanong Kabataan sa Pilipinas
MCC	Myanmar Council of Churches
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
MINA	Myanmar Interfaith Network on AIDS
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NACP	National AIDS Control Programme
NCCB	National Council of Churches in Bangladesh
NCCI	National Council of Churches in India
NCCJ	National Christian Council in Japan
NCKK	National Council of Churches in Korea
NCCN	National Council of Churches of Nepal
NCCP	National Council of Churches in the Philippines
NEC	National Evangelical Church
NRC	National Register of Citizens
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OI	Opportunistic Infection
PCC	Pacific Conference of Churches
PCI	Presbyterian Church of India
PCT	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
PEP	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
PGI	Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia
PJP	Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace
PLHIV	People Living with HIV and AIDS

PPI	Pakistan Partnership Initiative
PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
PTV	Pilgrimage Team Visit
RCAP	Regional Committee in Asia Pacific
REO	Regional Ecumenical Organisations
SAIEVAC	South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SHED	Social Health and Education Development
SOGI	Sexual Orientation Gender Identity
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCCP	United Church of Christ in the Philippines
UHC	Universal Health coverage
UMC	United Methodist Church
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VCTC	Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre
WCC	World Council of Churches
WDP	World Day of Prayer
WHO	World Health Organization
WVI	World Vision International
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

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