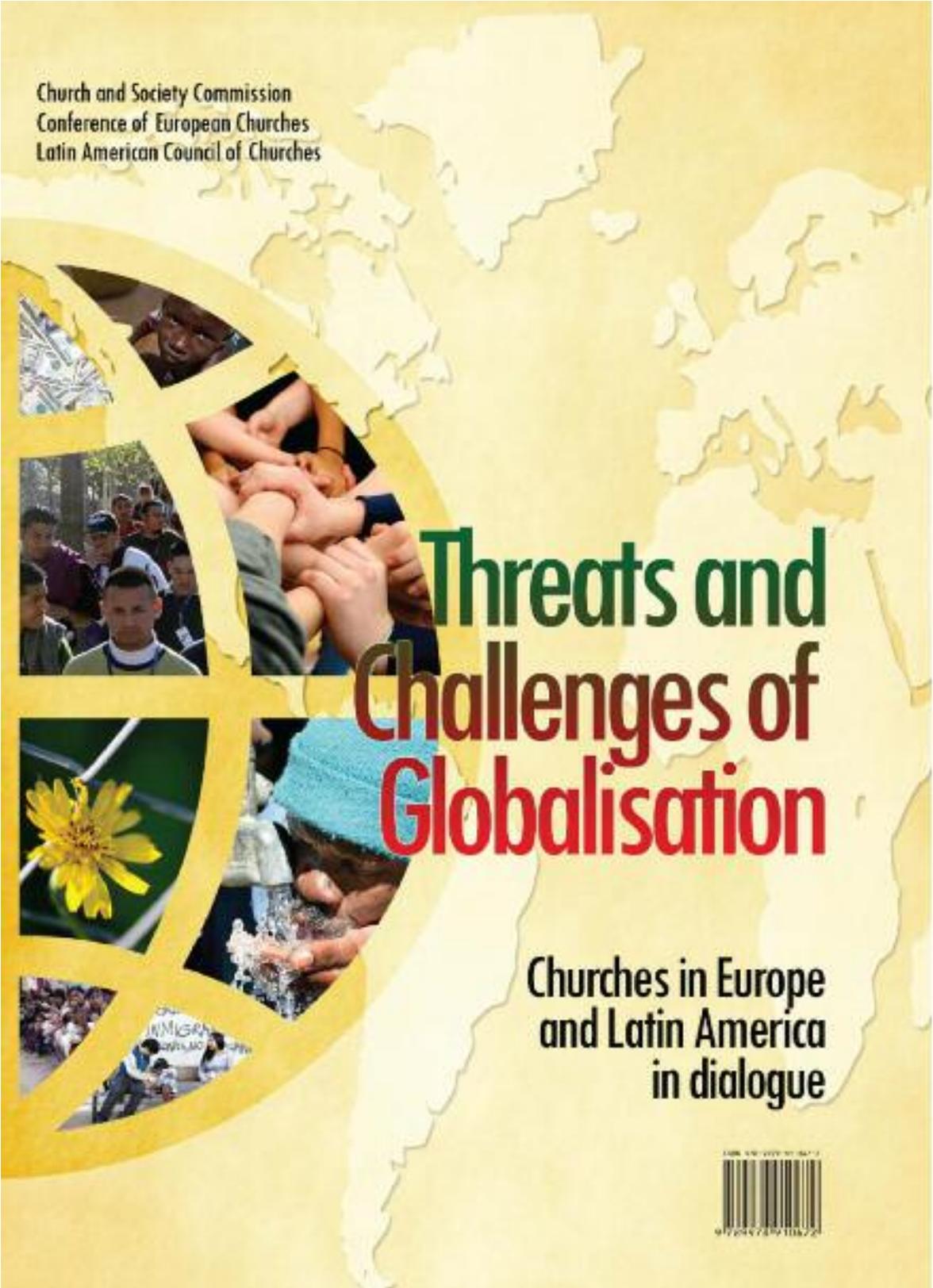


Church and Society Commission
Conference of European Churches
Latin American Council of Churches



Threats and Challenges of Globalisation

Churches in Europe
and Latin America
in dialogue





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Conference of European Churches



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Executive Summary

In different parts of the globe, the impact of globalisation on the everyday life of people is experienced in different ways. Different histories and traditions have also played a role. One of the biggest gaps in the experience of the impacts of globalisation and the churches' approaches to globalisation has been witnessed between the churches from Europe and Latin America. This has been the main reason leading to the initiative of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CSC/CEC) of establishing the direct link with the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), with the aim of organising a dialogue focusing on commonalities and differences related to globalisation between both continents. From the beginning, the main objective of the dialogue was to contribute to the overcoming of mistrust, prejudices and lack of information on both sides and to serve as a trust-building measure between churches from both continents.

Information about life in Latin America is not sufficiently up-to-date in many parts of Europe. On the other hand, Latin American churches asked churches in Europe to provide substantial information concerning the European integration process, the situation in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the iron curtain, as well as about basic characteristics of the social welfare state model and the role of the churches in it.

The dialogue between CSC/CEC and CLAI, which took place in the course of 2009-10, was a contribution to this aim. It has been a confidence-building process that has enabled the opening of doors for a further exchange and deepening of co-operation between churches from both continents, as well as between the ecumenical organisations, CEC and CLAI.

The document presented is a result of this dialogue in three parts. The first part addresses areas in which churches of CEC and CLAI differ in their positions. Dialogue, although intensive and sincere, does not always and necessarily eliminate differences. The different histories of Europe and Latin America, different socio-political set-ups and different impacts, in form and intensity, of the current

globalisation processes are the causes of different experiences and different stand-points, sometimes using the same language in a different way. Similar words may have different connotations. Explanation and careful clarification is the way forward. The section identifies, in particular, two major key-phrases, the role of the state and the function of the empire, which are widely-used and bear with them a load of connotations which need to be further clarified and explained. The text also identifies another key-phrase, the role of the market, for which the dialogue was able to summarise a conclusion in which the approach of churches from Europe and Latin America are very close to each other. Both parties agreed on common values which should underpin and guide an efficient and functioning market serving the needs of people.

The second part, 'Signals of change', outlines the grounds on which churches from both continents are able to speak with a common voice and delineates the basis for a common position. It is a joint plea for a stronger interdependence between politics, economics and civil society and for a strengthening of the effort towards a sufficiency economy, which is set as a counter-image to an economy based on greed and financed through extensive and ever-increasing debts. The section addresses some topics in the complex area of work and employment and puts emphasis on the experiences of churches with the process of regional integration. Churches in Europe have accumulated a lot of experience, having been in an intensive dialogue with the political structures of the European Union through the decades of the gradually-evolving European integration process. Churches in Latin America stand at the beginning of regional integration efforts on their continent and are seeking ways of positioning themselves vis-à-vis the various elements of the process.

The third part focuses on the identification of areas of common action. Churches from both continents are aware of the particular responsibility they have in their work on common concerns; in protection of the vulnerable, in addressing the gap between wealth and poverty, in the work for protection of creation. The text identifies several concrete areas for possible joint action of churches from both continents: climate justice, ecological debt, illegitimate debts, hunger and food crises and water as a global challenge and a human right.

The document does not represent the final outcome of the process. The text maps the positions of both sides, creates a framework for continuation of the dialogue between churches from both continents and fosters a consultative process, expressing the engagement of the churches in addressing the impacts of globalisation in its various forms as well as a commitment of churches from the two continents to work together.

The document has been approved by the decision-making bodies of the CSC/CEC and CLAI. It represents a joint contribution of CSC/CEC and CLAI to the WCC Process on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology.

Foreword

Social inequalities, exclusion, misery, growing debts, speculation, financial instability; these are some of the words and concepts that are used not only by the economist or sociologist or politician interested in responding to the needs of the people. These are the terms that appeal to the understanding of the church's mission in the complex realities of our time. It is without dispute that economic globalisation, along with opening opportunities, is accompanied by a number of worrying elements, and its manifold impacts have become to a large extent a determining factor of life.

While sharing agreement on any number of concerns, there are differences in the way these impacts of globalisation are experienced in the everyday life of people in different parts of the globe. Differences in perspective and experience between the industrialised and developing parts of the globe, and of the various groups within them, call for the strengthening of dialogue, in which churches have a role to play. Particularly important in this respect is the need for an exchange between Europe and Latin America. This has been the main reason for a dialogue between the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) and the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CSC/CEC) which could address these themes.

The first stage of this process achieved much more than expected. Joint work, open exchange and respect for each other's histories, contexts and experiences were vital steps contributing much to the overcoming of mistrust, prejudice and lack of information on both sides. Our dialogue was first of all a confidence and trust-building measure and this is the main achievement of our efforts, opening doors for further steps forward.

We believe that the dialogue between CSC/CEC and CLAI, which took place in the course of 2009-10, was just the first fundamental step in a larger process, and it established a framework for further exchange and for the deepening of cooperation between churches from both continents, as well as between both ecumenical or-

ganisations, CEC and CLAI. The submitted document is a result of this dialogue, and it is a testimony to a growing convergence after a period where the divide between churches in Europe and in Latin America had seemed to become greater. It also looks ahead, outlining an agenda to be addressed in the future.

The present document therefore does not represent the final outcome of the process. Instead, it maps the positions of both sides and creates a framework for the continued fostering of this kind of direct dialogue between churches of both continents. We truly are grateful to all who contributed to this process in different ways up until now.

Toward our aim of even further involving the churches of Europe and Latin America in this process, and thus also making its continuation both more grounded and productive, it is vital that the churches have the opportunity to read this document and participate in the future direction of the dialogue with their viewpoints and recommendations.

Therefore, we invite the churches of CEC and CLAI to reflect on the document and share with us the fruit of these reflections. For example: What within the dialogue thus far is most relevant to your respective contexts and to the shared challenges of our two continents? On the other hand, what within the document do you feel might not be particularly relevant? Also, having studied the document and the process as reflected within it, what else do you feel should be included as themes for further discussion and engagement?

CSC/CEC and CLAI welcome with pleasure the involvement from the churches, church-related organisations and individuals in both continents, as well as from the larger ecumenical family. We hope to receive their comments and reactions to this text and in this way nurture the next stages of our joint commitment.

In hope that our joint efforts and work together across the continents can contribute to the churches' witness amidst the burning issues of the societies in which we all live, we, as co-chairs of the joint Task Force, appreciatively submit this text to our churches and to the broader public.

Bishop Julio Murray
President of CLAI

OKR Dr. Ulrich Moeller
Moderator of the CSC/CEC Task Force

Introduction

The joint CEC-CLAI Task Force, appointed to work on the impacts of globalisation in Europe and Latin America, gathered in Buenos Aires and Oslo in May and November 2009 and in Budapest in November 2010. The results of this work have been approved by the respective decision-making bodies of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CSC/CEC) and the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI). The following text is an expression of growing trust, increasing respect and learning from each other, as well as an expression of joint commitment for further work and action.

Churches in Europe and Latin America have gone through different histories, live in different realities and therefore in many respects have different perspectives on the challenges stemming from globalisation. We have come together in respectfulness and appreciation of each other's position and consider that this enriches our dialogue. In sharing our perspectives, we have learnt from one another and envisioned the particular content of our mission as churches in the context of our societies within the global challenge we have as the Church of Jesus Christ in the world.

Our dialogue has been influenced by the fact that both in Europe and Latin America we live through a time of crisis. This is a crisis of the financial and economic system and of the ecological and climatic balance of the world we share as our living space. The churches, especially the churches of the South, warned that the financial and economic crisis would come and churches all over the world have for decades challenged the fact that our lifestyle leads to an over-consumption of the resources of the Earth.

Today, when this crisis has become reality, we are challenged as churches and human beings to invent genuinely new approaches where the solutions are owned by all parties affected and where the integrity of creation is respected. We agree that the enforced neoliberal policies have led to grave injustice, to an unequal distribution of wealth, to an overstraining of the Earth and finally to the near-collapse of the financial and economic system that we are now seeing.

We wonder whether this near-collapse has brought defenders of the neoliberal model to recognize its failure or at least to profoundly acknowledge the need for change. Although some concrete political measures have been taken or are under consideration, it appears that at this point in time powerful sectors, for example the financial sectors, are not supporting – and often work against – necessary changes in the system.

Together, we call for the reinforcement of responsible, just and legitimate governments in order to play a decisive role in meeting the present challenges. To ensure this, it is imperative that the peoples of all states can get decent living conditions with regard to health, food, housing and education and are empowered to participate in decision-making and that systems of transparency and accountability are implemented on the local, national, regional and global levels.

We also call for all actors from private, civil and political sectors to see their roles in this and to account for both the internal results and the external effects of their planned actions. Democratic politics must regain its primacy over the economy if we are to achieve a development that is both just and sustainable.

As churches, responsible to God, we have to play our roles in both Latin American and European contexts, to raise our voice in order to make decision-makers aware and awake regarding their roles, responsibilities and objectives. Responsibility needs someone to respond to. Churches are, in principle, well-placed to be such instances to which the powerful will have to respond, together with other parts of civil society.

The Church has a prophetic role and should confront decision-makers. We acknowledge that, as churches, we are called to protect basic human rights, promote life in dignity, and raise questions pertaining to illegitimate debt and the links between the unjust system and the production of poverty. The dignity of the human being and the sacredness of the Earth also have implications for the system and for concrete political decisions.

Therefore, we need to become actors who are not spellbound by globalisation, neither in a positive nor negative way. We must enter the field of action, opt for the poor and, although we should try to keep our hands clean, we must not let this fear keep our hands from working for a peaceful and just future. We are called to be constantly aware that the role of the church is not only to be responsible for addressing the crisis but also for taking care of the individual person. Churches are present in the places where people are and should through caring, witness and our own praxis and example be signs of hope. In the dialogue, we have listened to each other's successes and mistakes and are ready to learn from each other.

Both parties agree that the way to just trade does not go through the imposition of unfair so-called “free-trade” conditions. We also agree that the market is not evil per se and that wherever there are human beings, there will be a market for trading of goods. We need, however, to work closer on the questions of what this means, for example, with regard to state-market relations, to alternative economics and to the primacy of politics. We also need to continue to deepen our understanding of each other, the different contexts in which we exist as churches and the ways to challenge the power structure in order to promote life. Special attention should be given to the significant political transformation which Latin America is now going through. We will also need to include themes of exclusion on the basis of gender, ethnicity, class and culture.

Despite our differences of perspective, we recognise that we share the same call to be witnesses and to constitute signs of hope. We need to keep the spaces for dialogue open, both to deepen our understanding of each other and to be able to meet future challenges. On one fundamental perspective we agree: Neither the climatic nor the economic crisis can be solved without respecting freedom at the same time as a commitment to justice.

“Freedom” and “justice” are words which have historically and presently been misused in Europe and Latin America to justify exclusion and the continued dominance and privilege of a powerful minority over and above the options for life of the majority. As one example, whether it be the demand for a “free” press or for “free” enterprise, the precious ideals of “liberty” and “freedom” have often been used to exclude rather than include and to maintain the advantages of elite sectors while the majority continue without due representation. On the other hand, similar mechanisms can be noted in the repression of freedoms in the name of “justice” and “equality”. The questions, “Freedom and justice for whom?” and “Freedom and justice for what?” have rarely been asked. Because of this, and considering the severity of the economic and climatic crises, we call for a robust reflection on the meaning of freedom in its relationship to justice and in light of the necessity to curb the historical and present advantages which dominant societal sectors have maintained and which have contributed directly to these crises.

Our work has been inspired by the words of the Bible:

*Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.*

Psalm 85:10-11

Churches from Europe and Latin America in dialogue: different experience and common concerns

1. Different experience

Latin America is a continent characterised by dynamic changes and struggling with substantial social and economic challenges. In the understanding of the Latin American churches of CLAI, most of these have their cause in external forces influencing the continent from outside. Latin America is a continent struggling with the heritage of colonialism, which influenced the continent through the creation of unnatural and artificial borders, through the impact of a neoliberal development paradigm, through structural adjustment policies resulting in major debt problems and, in recent decades, through the dramatic impact of free market policies imposed on countries in the framework of neoliberal globalisation.

Latin America has been a victim of external influences caused by the dominating world power relationships. The prevailing far-reaching and fundamental criticism on the current form of globalisation characterises it as a process of imposing the structure leading to accumulation of wealth in the hands of those who are already wealthy and impoverishing those who are poor and voiceless.

Europe, for its part, does feel itself more a master of its own history. Although the experience of Central and Eastern Europe with state socialism, sustained by an external military power for most of the 20th century, demonstrates a dramatic experience of a different kind than the history of Western Europe, the overcoming of totalitarian regimes at the end of the 20th century gives Europe more confidence in its own capabilities. The successful process of European integration and the existence of the EU and its increasing economic strength confirm this trend. Globalisation is considered a mix of positive and negative effects: Europe, as a continent having the power to impose its policies on other continents and to attract the benefits of globalisation, is at the same time a victim of these processes.

A feature of the specific European attitude to globalisation is the experience of the social market economy significantly rooted in the continent. With all its deficiencies, the combination of an effective market with social considerations and a model of the welfare state, as demonstrated to the joint Task Force by the example of Norway, proved in many respects to be efficient guidance in looking for an effective answer to the challenges of globalisation.

Although we are using the same word, we acknowledge that “socialism” means something quite different for Latin America and Europe. In Europe, socialism has been a reality in much of its territory for most of the 20th century. State socialism was sustained by an extensive military power and scrupulous state control over the lives of the people. The experience of socialism in Central and Eastern Europe has been accompanied by enormous suffering, imprisonments, violation of basic human rights and millions of deaths. In Latin America, in general, socialism is seen as a social and economic system which comes from the grassroots, empowers and involves communities, and embodies a democratic and representative political option which strives for equity and equality. A Latin American perspective on socialism is closely linked with the indigenous concept of *Buen Vivir* (Sumak Kawsay/Suma Qamaña), which is akin to an abundant communal life lived in harmony within and between human communities and the rest of nature. We do recognize that the European as well as Latin American perspectives on socialism come from different contexts and are influenced by different historical experiences; whereas the Latin American perspective on socialism is still very much an ideal which has been historically disrupted, often by external forces, and is currently being struggled for, in Central and Eastern Europe it is a part of the history which needs to be overcome.

The concept of ‘Empire’

The concept of ‘Empire’ has been controversial in the ecumenical debate for several years. It was used, among other places, in the Accra Declaration (2004) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and in the AGAPE document presented to the General Assembly (2005) of the World Council of Churches (WCC). Also, in the context of our dialogue, we have not reached full agreement on this concept.

From the perspective of the Latin American churches of CLAI, as well as from the popular view of the majority of the population in Latin America, ‘Empire’ is a familiar word. Colonial history and also the recent historical context of the relationship of Latin America with the United States have particular significance in this respect. ‘Empire’ in this relationship is not a term describing a geographical concept, but more a reflection of a dominant ideology, on the basis of which different actors,

e.g. transnational corporations, etc., exploit countries, pillage natural resources and negatively affect people living in Latin American countries. It always has a negative connotation.

CLAI views 'Empire' not simply in terms of a territorial or geographic positioning but as a hegemonic web which exerts a coercive power oftentimes based more on indirect control and dominance, and involves both States and Corporations, with increasingly blurred lines between them. 'Empire's' control is thus less cohesive and centralized and its geography is at the same time both indefinite and pervasive. However, it imposes its will and exacts its tribute on a global scale all the same, with attendant cultural, political, economic and social coercion and domination, and enforced as well through military, ideological, linguistic, legal and mediatic means. There is a reality of State and regional domination and imperialistic designs which cannot be ignored, yet at the same time the realm of the 'Empire' is more diffuse and its power oftentimes less absolute than traditional definitions might allow. It should be noted that the regional notion of 'Empire' is still valid, however, as overdeveloped States in a more advanced stage of capitalism, and the corporations which pertain to them, by their very nature must dominate other peoples and regions – as well as their own in differing ways – so that the unsustainable modes of production and consumption can continue and 'growth' can be achieved.

'Empires' have had a further negative impact on ethnic diversity and the ancestral cultures and traditions that frame the identity of Latin America. 'Empire' also has its theological expression that dominates souls and minds under the so-called 'Theology of Prosperity'.

In Europe, opinions regarding the use of the concept of 'Empire' differ: although the term 'Empire' finds its use in a description of the hegemonic political and economic powers within the process of globalisation, the use is not widespread. 'Empire' as a term describing the dynamics of globalisation is mostly seen to be both too general and too simplifying, not contributing to reaching practical solutions. A simplified division of the world between North and South with the identification of the North with the power of the 'Empire' and the South with suffering victims of globalisation is not considered a helpful reflection of the reality. It leaves aside the existence of poverty in the so-called 'rich North,' within the countries concerned, as well as in some individual countries belonging geographically to the North, but which have a level of per capita income belonging more to the poor, developing and transition countries. This simplified view leaves aside the existence of wealthy countries in the geographical South, as well as wealthy segments of society within other countries of the South. It also leaves aside the dynamics of economic and social transformation within a number of these countries. Moreover, the term 'Empire' is reminiscent of 'the system', which was a term used during the Cold War era referring to the all-

dominating rule of Communist Parties in Central and Eastern Europe.

In the message from the Global Dialogue on the Accra Confession, issued by 58 representatives of churches of the Reformed tradition and global ecumenical institutions from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and the Middle East, who met in South Africa in September 2009 to reflect and dialogue on the Accra Confession, the following text on 'Empire' was agreed upon:

“We speak of empire, because we discern a coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power in our world today, that constitutes a reality and a spirit of lordless domination, created by humankind yet enslaving simultaneously; an all encompassing global reality serving, protecting and defending the interests of powerful corporations, nations, elites and privileged people, while imperiously excluding, even sacrificing, humanity and exploiting creation; a pervasive spirit of destructive self-interest, even greed - the worship of money, goods and possessions; the gospel of consumerism, proclaimed through powerful propaganda and religiously justified, believed and followed; the colonization of consciousness, values and notions of human life by the imperial logic; a spirit lacking in compassionate justice and showing contemptuous disregard for the gifts of creation and the household of life.”

Although several churches in Europe agreed to this text, the notion of 'Empire' has not entered the mainstream vocabulary of the churches.

The role of the state

Throughout the last two centuries, two fundamental principles have been underlined in the development of the European understanding of the state. These are the principles of freedom and democracy. The first one emphasises that the power of the sovereign is not a goal in itself, but should rather be seen as legitimised only through its adequacy in ensuring the well-being and freedom of individuals and groups. The democratic principle states that the powers of all authorities within a state ultimately stem from the people. This principle is safeguarded partly through regular elections on the national, regional and local level, but just as importantly through the possibility of popular participation in political decisions and the processes leading to such decisions.

Positive appreciation of the role of the state is rooted in particular in Western Europe. Central and Eastern Europe, with the negative experience of the totalitarian state, is historically more sceptical towards the role of the state. The European integration process, which has significantly marked European history in recent decades and which is characterised by the voluntary transfer of a number of com-

petencies belonging to nation states to the transnational European level, puts again the role of the state and considerations about it in the European set-up into a new context.

Latin American historical development, marked by colonialism and military dictatorships, offers many fewer reasons for developing a positive appreciation of the role of the state. The state in Latin America in many cases has offered an even more blatant example of failure to respond to the manifold tasks of modern days, compared to the experience of Central and Eastern Europe, with undemocratic and ineffective organisation of the state administration.

Therefore, there is an intensive effort in various parts of Latin American society, including the churches, to consider a new concept of the state. There are growing aspirations for the development of a social state: the state of rights, in which all the social actors have a role to fulfil and which will establish the rules of economic activity in such a way as to guarantee to everyone the exercise of their fundamental rights as well as of their duties as citizens. The Social State of Right is to be an entity exercising control over economic freedom and protecting the economically weak. The role of the state is expected to not only be the guarantor of economic progress, but equally to guarantee the integral development of the human being, that includes economic, political, social and cultural development with proper protection of the environment. It is the state of social integration that reconciles the various interests of different groups existing in the wider civil society.

In both Latin America and Europe the shared conviction is that nation states are no longer able to regulate their economies autonomously. The global economy requires global politics. In addition, the economy and the markets are not in a position to create on their own the solidarity and social coherence necessary for the proper functioning of society. The global economy needs global rules and global democratic institutions. It is increasingly recognised that the nation state alone is not able to face the challenges of modernity. These include climatic change, environmental destruction, global wealth distribution/poverty, health/diseases, and the protection and just distribution of global common goods.

2. Common context: Christian values as a benchmark for the life of Churches in Latin America and Europe

In the Christian perspective, the world as God's creation is God's household, given to humankind for responsible use. God invites all creatures to be the guests. Human beings are called to "cultivate and conserve" (Genesis 2:15) the globe, its resources and beautiful diversity as good stewards, on the local, regional and global level, in a globalised world.

Responding to God's offer and invitation leads us to aim at and strive for the following goals, which are the basis for value judgments of globalisation from a Christian perspective:

Justice: since all human beings are equally invited by God, justice as equal treatment and equitable access to resources is the consequence. Equal opportunities have to be given to everyone. This includes present and future generations.

Solidarity and respect: since many inequalities exist, solidarity and respect between people, and especially of the stronger with the weaker, is needed in order to implement justice. Inclusive communities are signs of God's kingdom.

Sustainability: since God invites all creatures to be the guests and since the globe has its limits, sustainable behaviour is needed in order to allow long-term life in dignity.

Freedom: reconciliation through Jesus Christ liberates from sin. This leads to freedom from destruction, oppression and dependency. This new freedom liberates and empowers life-saving behaviour for the whole community. The freedom to decide and to act is the basis for self-responsibility.

Participation: equality includes the right to participate in decisions and actions. God entitles everybody to contribute to building his kingdom, which allows inclusion of the manifold capabilities of human beings. Participation also leads to power sharing, which is necessary for its control and the limitation of its abuse.

Stewardship: the efficient, effective and careful use of limited resources is an expression of good stewardship and behaviour as a guest on God's Earth. The Earth is given to us a gift, not as a property.

Accountability: as stewards we are accountable to God and the community. Trust, control, transparency and, if needed, sanctions are a means for accountability.

It is the interaction between and the balanced relationships of these various concepts which lead to societies in which human beings can flourish.

We also would like to look together at a less human-centred perspective on creation and the human role within it. We are interested in exploring how the concept of *buen vivir* and the integral interrelatedness and intended harmony of the whole of creation might illuminate our reading of Genesis and all of Scripture and might transform our theologies around the role and relationship of human beings with the rest of nature. We commit ourselves to exploring more precisely the implications of viewing the Earth not as a gift for the human but as a gift and inheritance for all life.

3. From the financial crisis to human-centred financial markets

The CEC-CLAI dialogue took place in the period of time marked by the deepest economic and financial crisis for seventy years. The crisis gave a new face to the progressive globalisation we have experienced in different forms for more than two decades. The financial crisis became an economic, political, social, ethical and finally systemic crisis. The economic order itself, the relationship between economy and politics, as well as between economy and society, economy and environment, and economy and individual is being questioned.

It has been argued that almost twenty years of gradually intensifying globalisation has led to positive and negative effects. According to this argument, living standards have improved and well-being has been enhanced for significant parts of the global population. However, these improvements have been very localised. The number of those living in hunger and in despair of poverty has been reduced, mainly in Asia, but remains high. Statistical figures reported increased GDP in some parts of the world, but this did not help to achieve fair distribution of achieved wealth. The gap between wealth and poverty is still increasing and globalisation seems to contribute to this trend. The globalised world is not a significantly safer place now and instead selfishness, greed and consumerism are increasing.

We recognize that GDP is not an adequate measure of well-being and often not relevant when attempting to assess just distribution and improved life options for the majority. GDP often hides gross inequality and systemic injustice. Apart from the inadequacy of GDP as a proof of the success of globalisation, we should also stress that any mention of economic growth needs to seriously and critically view how this growth was obtained. We know that economic growth itself is neither positive nor negative, and how and from what sources the growth was achieved always needs to be examined and taken into account in a profound way. In many cases wealth is created by taking from and exploiting human groups and the rest of creation.

The current global crisis has revealed, along with dramatic economic and financial losses, what caused or contributed directly or indirectly to the crisis: deregulation, loss of efficient control over financial transactions, the existence of tax havens, the rise of virtual money, the virtual economy, speculation detached from the real economy and an unsatisfied desire for virtual wealth. The crisis has also demonstrated the need to rediscover the values and virtues described above under point 1.2 as ethical benchmarks.

In our opinion, in seeking the response to the financial crisis of 2008-9, particular concern needs to be given to the following:

- Instability, volatility and insecurity of the existing financial and economic system and its susceptibility to a sudden change from prosperity to depression. A close interrelationship between insecurity and freedom has once again been revealed.
- Over-proportional global concentration of financial power. Some finance and economic institutions became “too big to fail”, which is an indicator that the international regulations had not been adequate to the size and internationalisation of the financial markets.
- Deregulated financial markets became more powerful than some states and societies.

The crisis unmasked the inhumane character of the model, which is susceptible to these failures. A new relationship between state and economic private sector has to be established. The ideal of the primacy of market and trade over people cannot function anymore. There is a deep-seated recognition of the need for change. Technical improvements in the existing model of state supervision over the finance market are not sufficient. What is required is the reform of basic principles of the system in order to improve the service given by the economy to the community and the common good. The financial markets on all levels, from local to global, are very important for the economy and society. But they are not a goal in themselves; they have to be a service for a human-centred economy. The economy should serve people.

This means the need for a profound re-orientation of the financial markets in order:

- to support *job* creation and avoid jobless growth;
- to invest in *sustainable* solutions and avoid short-term perspectives;
- to serve the *needs* of the many and not the greed of a few;
- to invest in the *real* economy and limit speculation where it is detached from it;
- to contribute to financial *stability* and decrease volatility;
- to offer *transparent*, understandable and controllable financial products;
- to decrease capital flight and support the use of capital where it is needed;
- to allow *wealth* creation while supporting equity and solidarity.

4. Markets: meeting places or cheating places

Following the original meaning, ‘markets’ can be considered as the places where people meet, either physically or virtually, in order to exercise their economic and financial activities. They are the centres of economic life and the places where economic globalisation takes form.

We agree that the existence of the market is in itself a potential good. The market, however, needs to function within the proper regulatory framework. A market, in its original meaning, is a place for people to meet, to exchange, to relate with each other, to share. We may use this space for the good of the community or misuse it. Power relations within the functioning market may be a cause of injustice demonstrated by these relations. Although justice cannot be attained by the market alone, it is an important and necessary condition under which the market operates. Environmental concerns must be given proper consideration in market relations and in products being exchanged on the market. The final purpose is a sustainable market, without the devastating effects of speculation and hidden costs. The pricing of the products needs to take into account their costs in relation to the environment, often wrongly considered as external effects.

Equally, it also has to be recognised that a certain number of values for life cannot be distributed according to the market logic alone: basic food, housing, jobs, education, health care and social goods, such as justice, security, respect, affection, as well as basic social services and common goods, such as water and air, flora and fauna. The reason for this is that these values have to be considered as a right for everyone.

In recent decades, the functioning of markets became more and more deficient because of the lack of appropriate regulations. This has been expressed in the concept of neoliberalism that is based on the absolutism of the market and the diminished control of the government. This lack of appropriate regulation of the market could be seen not as an irregularity but in fact as an integral component of neoliberalism, which serves the interest of its beneficiaries. Churches of CLAI and CEC fully agree on many of the elements of criticism concerning free market globalisation. Although the wording, as well as the proposed actions, may be different - more radical for those who consider themselves victims of the system - the substantial criticism of the free and unregulated market is shared.

Current globalisation has to be significantly changed. The inherent perversity of its value system is based on inequalities and the law of the strongest and on economic and cultural domination to the detriment of life (including nature), well-being and human dignity, outside the control of the political decision makers (States). Significant economic actors (e.g. TNCs and international banks) have often proved to be corrupt and dominant within a largely unregulated global economy, which in itself is unable to create solidarity and social coherence.

The global economy needs global policies, laws and regulations within a global political framework with sufficient democratic guarantees. The danger that powers administering the prevailing system to their own advantage will try to defend themselves by all means, including corruption and even war, should not be underestimated.

Signals of change

Before the crisis broke out, CLAI and CEC were already active in tackling the negative effects of globalisation on societies. CLAI has associated itself with the social movement against free market globalisation (the World Social Forum) and formulated alternatives to the exclusively free market approach. A number of initiative groups within the European Churches are in solidarity with this approach.

As stated before, in 2008 the current model of globalisation broke down through a financial crisis closely followed by a deep crisis in the overall economy, which unmasked the systemic failure of the neoliberal model. In this period, it is important to create shared solutions in order to determine together what could be the answers of churches at this moment in time. Our dialogue may be one of the elements on the way towards this.

Along with significant negative impacts, the financial and economic crisis contributed in a positive way to several areas. The crisis opened the possibility to strengthen effects that may play a role in avoiding similar negative impacts in the future:

- Strengthening of multilateralism and openness for joint action;
- More openness for alternative economic models;
- New emphasis on personal virtues and integrity;
- New chance for environmental measures;
- Chance for new models of relations between politics and economy;
- Opportunities to resist imperial dominance.

However, after the impacts of the crisis, these possibilities seem to be again disappearing and major actors responsible for the crisis, e.g. banks, financial institutions and financial speculators, give the impression of not having learnt anything. Churches have to express a call of concern towards the governments and ask them to consider appropriate and urgent steps to make the institutions affected aware of their responsibilities.

1. Stronger interdependence between politics, economy and civil society

A call for an adequate regulatory framework, especially for financial markets, has become one of the first outcomes of the present economic crisis. Such a framework is seen as a prevention of the recurrence of similar excesses in the future. Churches all over the globe joined those calling for stronger and effective regulation of markets by the political sphere. What does the primacy of politics mean? What criteria need to be fulfilled? Is the primacy of politics a sufficient remedy? In answering these questions, we should avoid simplifications. All too often states have been victims of their own failures: corrupt state bureaucracies, irresponsible spending, public debt trap, greed and selfishness. How can the state fulfil its core task to serve people? The relationship between markets and politics is now, more than ever, an open question.

The history of the 20th century in substantial parts of Europe and Latin America demonstrates that the principle of the unqualified primacy of politics gives ground for serious concerns. The primacy of ideological, often authoritarian and sometimes even dictatorial politics pursued without regard to the will of people often leads to tragic consequences. On the other hand, the welfare state has brought enrichment of life and should be seen as a positive force.

Even in democratic politics a number of concerns remain. First of all there is a gap between politics and society. The hearts and minds of people are presently filled with deep mistrust against political institutions and politicians themselves. There are many instances demonstrating this in different forms.

The link between economics and politics is necessary. This link, however, should not be seen as one-sided. Economics must not prevail over politics. It is equally unacceptable to claim that politics should rule the economy. The relationship between politics and the economy is mutual, dialectical and interactive. Many phenomena that finally helped to develop the current crisis in a direct or indirect way would not have become so widespread, nor would they have materialised at all, if they were not supported by the political push for intensification and unjustified growth of the economy. A substantial part of the political elite sees in economic growth an end in itself, without any regard to its costs, such as dramatically increased public debts and indebtedness of entrepreneurs and consumers.

Economies should be assessed on the basis of their ability to serve the majority of society. All external costs, including the economic activity's environmental footprint, must be taken into consideration.

A responsible policy has to avoid the danger of a populist provision of 'goodies' to the public to push it to take the bait and to vote for those who promise most. Politicians ought to be responsible guardians of the economy. The above 'gifts', in

reality purchased by the taxpayer, may lead to a vicious circle of rising illegitimate debts incurred by irresponsible politicians.

What is needed is a different kind of politics. A call for the primacy of politics needs to be, therefore, accompanied by an appeal for participatory politics and for the involvement of citizens. The market is an economic instrument probably most aptly characterised by its fluidity, dynamism and by its ability to renew itself. It is therefore obvious that the market cannot be brought under efficient control by inflexible political structures reflecting persisting social inertia.¹

Only participatory forms of democracy, aiming at a higher degree of social mobility and standing firm against perpetuating and solidifying structures of political and economic power, can effectively regulate the market and provide leadership for society.

Primacy of politics needs criteria to be worked out and constantly adhered to. Political decisions based on corruption or providing one-sided benefits to some cannot give politicians broad public authority. Only openness and transparency with inbuilt self-regulatory mechanisms can provide politicians with desired legitimacy. Politics must be seen as a 'service' rather than a 'power struggle'.

'Private enterprise comes before State intervention' or vice versa are wrong alternatives. Both approaches are instruments to be used to achieve general social goals. However, the responsibility of both actors differs. Which of the variants is chosen depends on the goals and the social, ecological or cultural dimensions they are committed to.

2. For a sufficiency economy

It has been agreed that the following have to be included among the significant elements contributing to the crisis: too much trust in the self-regulating power of the 'invisible hand' of the market and the economy, over-expanded debts and

¹ Symptoms of societal inertia characterised by diminished societal mobility can be found in Europe, in Latin America as well as in other parts of the globe. Paradoxes characteristic of Latin American society can be summarised as follows:

- Paradox of the electoral victory of the political left and the power of the political right

Democracy has been established as a system, but democracy has not solved the problems of the poor and has not overcome corruption. Even democracy did not give the possibility of a real choice for the left.

- Paradox of development and hunger

The greater the hunger, the greater the gains from the export of food. Latin America has enormous natural resources, which do not serve the population: sugar and corn are produced for foreign markets. A balance between internal demands and offers for export has not been established. The result is the stepping up of social unrest in the streets and polarised civil society.

- Social Paradoxes

The more the governments support the poor, the less support they receive from the middle class, which is disappearing. Never before did democracy have to live with such high inequalities. Progressive poverty, inequality and exclusion are a danger to democracy.

human greed. Trust in the economy, giving it almost a religious cloth, is closely linked with the function of debts as an accompanying effect of personal, collective and institutional greed.

Credits and loans are the driving forces of the economy. The Christian perspective is not negative towards debt as such. However, in order to manage debts, historical experience calls for the utmost attention. The notable passages in the Bible include those calling for putting limits on debts and counterbalancing debts with justice and mechanisms releasing their burden. Periodical jubilees as occasions for releasing of debts did not only serve economic aims, they played an equally strong and positive role in healthy, just relationships in society. Luther and Calvin in the era of reformation, which coincided with dramatic changes in the whole of European society characterised by new mobility and by the new status given to trade and economic exchange, very strongly and in an articulated way expressed the need to keep debts under control. Economic globalisation has put these key principles aside. The debts of the 21st century have overstepped all acceptable and sustainable limits. Countries, nations, institutions and individuals are losing a sense of adequacy. Debts now exceed all proportions. Not having at hand satisfactory instruments for the management of debts, they became a driving force of the economy, having impacts far beyond the economy.

The ethical dimension of the crisis reminds us that debt, as the category underpinning the economic fabric of society, needs to be seriously reconsidered. Prosperity built on disproportionate and unjust debts cannot be sustainable. The Bible, in the words of the prophet Ezekiel, reminds us that what is required in a healthy society is not only the need to avoid oppression of anyone, but also to restore the debtor's pledge in due time, to commit no robbery, to give bread to the hungry and to cover the naked with a garment (Ezekiel 18:7). Enormous debts created by financial transactions which are the source of the current crisis must not simply be covered by government loans. Up to now, we have heard very little evidence from responsible decision-makers of a change that would substantially address those structures of the global financial system that have led us into the current crisis. We need – in a common and differentiated way – to shift from cultures and economies of greed and de-limitation, to cultures and economies of sufficiency.

Equally, dramatically increasing governmental debts in a number of countries must be brought under control. The state has to be a respectable actor in dealing with public finance. It is unethical and unacceptable to solve current problems at the expense of future taxpayers.² Debt is becoming the critical issue not only for

² Public debts in the developed and industrialised world are sky-rocketing. In 2010, according to Eurostat, the public debt as a percentage of GDP in Germany reached 83.2%, in Hungary 80.2%, in France 81.7%, in Italy 119.0% and in Greece even 142.8%.

poor and developing countries, but equally for wealthy economies. The question of the sustainability of this way of acting is increasingly on the agenda of the major political decision-makers.

The ethics of sufficiency means recognising limits in all our activities: in the economy, in the use of natural resources, also in our personal lives as well as in the performance of public authorities. We see particular promise in the concept of sufficiency and the Christian ethic of self-restraint. Personal ethics of self-restraint have belonged to the Christian worldview for centuries. It is an inseparable part of the Christian understanding of justice, without which freedom and real prosperity in any society cannot be attained. The assumption that the economy and a reasonable way of life would collapse if it is not supported by ever-increasing demand needs to be called into question and must be re-examined.

These are reasons why many features of our personal and public life need to be increasingly questioned. In Latin America, inspired by the ancient indigenous concept of *Sumak Kawsay*, ‘good and right living’, in contrast to ‘living well’, is expanding more and more. The latter model of ‘living well’ imposes on us a hedonistic life style, each time with greater force, based on values of consumption that do not accept any limits to its ambitions of accumulation and satisfaction.

We need an economy that serves people, based on a means of livelihood for future generations. Global society has to regard improving the situation of its poorest and most vulnerable members as its prime responsibility. We need a financial system that is subordinated to these responsibilities.

Finally, economics and politics are considered as the main driving forces of modern society. Dependent on their own rational schemes of operation, economics and politics frame a society which is functioning beyond rational prescriptions. In an effort to bridge the gap, there are enough voices at hand, even from inside of politics, calling out for values such as solidarity, social cohesion, equality, quality of life, etc. What is missing is to determine how these values could be brought into reality: from paper to the streets, from statements to daily life.

Even more, what is missing is clarity as to how these values can withstand pressure from other values; how sustainable these values are against the background of the dynamically changing situation in a globalised world and how these values need to be implemented if they are in conflict with other values, such as the value of competition. The basic question is whether politics and economics are the only driving forces, even if they would be functioning in the best possible harmony, that are able to offer satisfactory answers to the challenges put before us by progressive globalisation. For its proper functioning, the economy needs the counterbalance of democratic politics based on a strong civil society. Such politics need to be open to

constant renewal, accepting an ethical frame, which cannot be invented by politics itself.

3. Work and employment

Globalisation has brought increased competition and a drive for efficiency: it rewards particularly those who can produce efficiently and at lower costs. Pressure for ever-increasing productivity and efficiency has consequences: there are winners and losers. Those who remain stuck with old methods and products are destined to lose in the competition. It has always been like that, but globalisation made such competitive drives much more prominent.

The drive for work efficiency has brought many positive effects. Linked with mobility of capital, it has had far-reaching impacts on the situation of employment and the status of work. Globalisation contributed positively to the rapid economic development of many transition economies in Central and Eastern Europe and elsewhere. Countries without enough domestic capital have been able, through economic globalisation, to open doors for a rapid influx of foreign investment, relatively quick consolidation of their economies and, in several cases, a remarkable increase of their GDP.³

The drive for efficiency also has a counter effect. Taking as an example the Czech Republic: it is, above all, the Far Eastern competition that has put out of business many traditional makers of textiles and glass, some of them traditional producers for two or more centuries. This is not an isolated case. Fluidity and instability have become significant marks of the current economic situation.

However, a positive role for efficiency is fulfilled only if calculated costs are fair, without omissions in the calculation and without hidden subsidies. External costs need to be fully calculated into the production costs. Otherwise, the positive value of efficiency turns to be the opposite and competition becomes unfair and disruptive. We note that omissions, hidden subsidies and so-called externalities are integral components of neoliberalism and it could not function without them. Additionally, these omissions are a primary basis for perceived economic growth and for the benefits which neoliberalism promises.

In the new situation it is no longer tenable to keep the old concept of Third World countries being objects of exploitation by traditionally rich Western countries only. Globalisation is now not only pushed by traditional economic 'empires' like the United States or the EU, but increasingly by newly-rising giants like China

³ GDP per capita has increased between 2000 and 2008 in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania by 120%, 103% and 95% respectively, in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovenia by 57%, 79%, 41%, 50% and 50% respectively.

and India, and perhaps by other rising South and East Asian economies like those of the Republic of Korea, Taiwan and Singapore.

This has dramatic consequences for the situation of employment. The work force, not being equipped with the same mobility as capital, has had to face shortfalls of work opportunities with consequences for family income, quality of life and many other aspects of the existence of individuals and communities. Rising unemployment has become a steady accompanying phenomenon of economic globalisation. Even more, employment in the era of economic globalisation is not anymore a guarantee for a decent income. Poverty has become a steady effect of economic globalisation.

The changing character of the status of work is also one of the accompanying effects of globalisation. Work has ceased to be a way of personal fulfilment; instead it is becoming a fight for survival. Human alienation in a globalised society has become a more visible reality than it was at any time beforehand.

In this respect, we also see an increasing discrimination in terms of gender. Women are very often the first victims of unemployment. Our societies should promote a more active participation of women in all the different sectors of life - economic, political, civil, cultural and social - as full and equal participants in decision-making, as leaders and beneficiaries.

A human being in a globalised economy is valued first of all as a consumer. The role of production is more and more given to robotic and mechanised instruments. Alienation, solitude and individualism then receive status as hallmarks. More and more people are afraid of economic redundancy.

An important role in this regard is played by various forms of informal employment. The efforts of functional states need to be directed to minimise these forms of income-generating economic activity. In situations where the state is not in a position to fulfil its basic role as a provider of social security, it is the task of churches and social organisations to step into the process as an actor providing a space for necessary transformation and in looking for new models of economic engagement of these people.

There is a role for churches in community building, even in harsh economic and social circumstances. The aim of achieving social cohesion is not only possible through political instruments. Cooperation of the state and civil society, including churches and religious communities, is a necessary precondition to achieve this aim.

The embeddedness of the economy, an economy which is not only a source of meaningful employment, and the relationship of the economy to the status of work and its impact on the life of individuals, families and communities, need to get much more attention. The economy has to serve everybody; not only those who are the best fitted.

4. Regional integration

For Latin America the term ‘integration’ has connotations linked to the experience of the hegemony of neoliberal policies. Integration of markets under the terms of NAFTA is, in the perception of the majority of the population, based on the dominance of the rules of the market and commerce. This model of integration based on linking together economically different and unequal partners left serious traces on the quality of life of people in Latin America. As a result of this policy, it seems that the strong became stronger and the weak even weaker. Therefore, Latin America is now looking for new models of integration allowing not just for integration of markets. New ways of integration mean to recognise the market, but not to allow the market alone to be the driving and regulatory force of the integration process.

In this sense, the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) has stated repeatedly that the future of their churches, member organisations and associates is directly linked to the destiny of the people and countries of the continent where they are rooted.

Churches play an active role in the integration process. At the beginning of 2009, the President of the Republic of Paraguay requested that CLAI be the chair of an interreligious round table of the four countries of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR): Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. In following that initiative, the dialogue of religious leaders on subjects such as faith and environment, wealth and poverty, religion and state, citizenship and political participation took place between May and July 2009. For the first time, religious leaders sat around a table and engaged in a dialogue on common subjects beyond their own borders, from the specificity of each religious expression (Jews, Muslims, Baha’i, Christians of the different currents and traditions, Umbanda and others). The role of the Church in the integration processes does not have to be limited only to accompanying political and economic engineering but, in addition, it will have to be open to speak with others, from its own specificity, on what these models mean for the different religious groups that coexist within their geographical region.

The European continent has gone through the experience of regional integration over a period of 50 years. Efforts to achieve modern integration were launched after the 2nd World War in the Western part, and expanded successfully in the last decade of the 20th century to Central and more Eastern parts of the continent.

The integration process in Europe has been supported by churches since its inception. Characteristic signs and core values of the European integration project were mentioned already in 1950: peace, reconciliation, solidarity and justice. Commitment to these values does not make integration in Europe a Christian project. The Christian conviction of the ‘founding fathers’ of the integration, however,

played a strong role in the motivation and shaping of the whole process. In its original intention, the European integration process went beyond reconciling states; it aimed at reconciling the peoples of Europe. This can also be seen in the preamble of the Treaty of Rome (1957) that established the European Economic Community: its first objective was “an ever closer union among the European peoples”. This phrase has remained in all new treaties ever since. The human dimension of European integration was made even more explicit in some statements by Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of European integration and architect of the Schuman plan. He emphasised in 1952: “We are uniting people”.

This is close to the churches’ understanding of the process: that the core of the integration process has to be the person, the human being and a better quality of life. Churches have always been convinced that the process of integration of peoples, countries and nations must not be limited to the economic agenda. The integration process has to have strong political, social, cultural, ethical and spiritual components, as well as economic ones. In this sense, every process of integration must guard and take care of the improvement and quality of life of the people; to assure the right and the access to all the goods the culture can offer and to remain open to cooperation with other experiences of integration, based on the principles of cultural inclusiveness between people and right relations among countries. For that reason, we say that the search for unity is based on respect and right relations of coexistence. This is at the core of the ecumenical cooperation in the search for unity for service and giving testimony.

As stated in the policy document of the CEC dealing with the integration process, “The primary motivation behind the Churches’ involvement is the theological understanding of engagement within God’s creation, with consequences and benefits for the people in Europe and the participation of the European peoples in shaping a united continent. Therefore an aim of the Churches’ engagement with European integration is to accompany it with a theologically based ethical and anthropological perspective, which can provide criteria for the evaluation of the European policies aimed at fostering integration.”⁴

Dialogue between churches in Europe and European political institutions has become a tradition over the past several decades. The possibility of such a dialogue has also become an opportunity for churches to work closely together in presenting their concerns to the political institutions through a common voice. The possibility for an effective dialogue between the churches and religions and the European Union has been reinforced by the new legislation of the EU that entered into force

⁴ ‘European integration – A way forward?’ - Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches, 2009.

in December 2009. The Lisbon Treaty in its article 17 calls for an open, transparent and regular dialogue between the EU and the churches and religions, and provides the legal framework for it.

This kind of regional integration progressing in Europe, as well as that just starting in Latin America, is one of the promising answers to the deficiencies of economic globalisation driving global development at the current stage.

Although churches in both continents welcome these integration processes and accompany them in a constructive and critical way, it is agreed however that the values which are valid internally within the regional entities should also be applied by them to the outside world. In this light, some external impacts of the EU have to be addressed, e.g. protectionism, agricultural subsidies, restrictive immigration policies, intellectual property and patenting of biodiversity. Values which apply inside the structure of the EU should not at the same time be violated outside.

5. Globalisation as an opportunity for building relations

In spite of many reasons for concern because of its negative effects, globalisation offers a new way of relationship between people from different parts of the world. Modern communication makes it possible to transmit news and information to different parts of the world and enables sharing of information to an unprecedented extent.

This is closely linked with the favourable setting globalisation offers for the support and strengthening of political freedoms that are unavoidable preconditions for healthy development and for the betterment of society. Freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom of communication and sharing are basic and natural human needs. The states that quell them degenerate into police states and the society withers. In the case of some countries, political barriers that hamper these freedoms are however not the only concerns that need to be taken into consideration.

The communications revolution caused by advances in technical means exceeds even the most courageous expectations of the previous generations. This leads to an overflow of information, the result of which is a need for development of a personal protective mechanism against the syndrome of 'too much information'. It would seem that with access to more information people would be better informed. Taking into account the situation, we need to be aware that often real substance is missing from the communications media, given the struggle for the right to freedom of speech and a special interest to set the agenda of the different issues that are at hand. We are witnessing an increasing role of populism in politics and advertising in the economy. Marketing is becoming a universal tool for both economics and

politics. A fading ability to make a choice causes information to lose its original value and to become a source of apathy, isolation and human coldness.

What is missing is taking the needs of others seriously; what is missing is a response. Globalisation then makes the suffering of the other at the same time closer to us, but also more distant. What is missing is the ability or interest to build healthier relations in an interdependent world.

There is a growing need for more occasions for personal exchange, solidarity and sharing, which is not based on electronic communication alone - which does not necessarily call for a response - nor on economic categories of profit and loss but, on the contrary, on human interest and human closeness. Churches and social organisations can make people aware of this and be themselves examples in this respect.

Joint commitments stemming from the dialogue

1. Role of the churches

Churches need to be constantly aware that the role of the Church is being responsible to take care of the individual person and his/her community. Churches are present in the places where people are and they should be signs of hope through caring, witness and their own praxis and example. At the same time, the Church has a prophetic role and should be ready to confront decision-makers and make them aware and awake regarding their roles, responsibilities and objectives. This prophetic voice of the Church needs to be heard clearly, eloquently and timely, but also as articulately as possible on the issues of the day. Churches insist on protection of human rights and promotion of life; they deal with questions pertaining to illegitimate debt and the links between the unjust system and the production of poverty. The dignity of the human being and the fair use of Earth's natural resources also have implications for the system and for concrete political decisions.

In many places in our communities the gap between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, is threatening to widen and increasingly alienate us all over the world. The complexity of the problems and the magnitude of the challenges may place an excessive strain on us and perhaps cause us to give up hope. It is therefore even more important for us to mutually encourage one another in our local congregations and churches and as members of the worldwide ecumenical community of churches and to take practical steps to overcome these divisions, with the help of the Holy Spirit and as a sign of hope for the world.

We need to continue our work on deepening our understanding of socio-political concepts that may have different connotations in different circumstances in our distinct conditions of life. Despite our differences of perspective, we recognise that we have the same call to be witnesses and constitute signs of hope of God's presence in this world. Special attention needs to be given to the significant political and eco-

conomic transformations which many countries in our respective regions are now going through.

We recognise that we have experienced some challenges because of diversity in culture and language. The reality of coming from different experiences and different cultures can be an obstacle at times, but the possibility of dialogue has helped us to strengthen relations and be more supportive of each other.

In view of the joint experience of the dialogue and shared interest to work on issues concerning the relationship between church and society, as well as church and state, CLAI and CEC should continue to inform each other of their work in these thematic areas in order to learn from each other's experiences.

As regional bodies, CEC and CLAI have a special focus on the regional integration going on in both continents. In the dialogue, we have listened to each other's successes and mistakes, but we will have to work further on the issues which are relevant to regional integration within our respective continents.

The particular attention of churches needs to be given to migration. Immigration to the continent, as well as internal migration within the continent, needs to be faced. Churches in both Europe and Latin America play a role in responding to different challenges linked to migration: raising their voice in protection of the dignity of the person, protection of human rights, integration of migrant communities and helping them in their basic needs and many other areas. Following the initiative of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe⁵, 2010 was declared the Year of Migration for the churches of CEC, a period of time with more intensive attention to this work.⁶

We see the need for dialogue with other religions, with other faith-based groups and organisations. We need to keep the spaces of dialogue open, both to make our understanding of each other more profound, and to be able to meet future challenges.

Because we have noticed the tendency in the market to work in one language, we were cautioned that a dominant language was not desired; so, we were well aware of the need to be open to the challenge of working in and with multilingual experiences.

CEC and CLAI trusting together commit themselves to the following:

⁵ <http://www.ccme.be/>

⁶ For further information see: <http://migration2010.eu/index.php?id=579>

2. Climate Justice

2.1 Churches' responsibility for climate justice

Global climate change represents one of the greatest existential threats for the present and coming generations. It exacerbates poverty and threatens life itself. Global climate change destroys natural resources, undermines opportunities for development and intensifies injustice. People living in poverty worldwide are the main victims, i.e. from the over-consumption of energy by the industrialised countries and the global consumer classes. In addition to this, misdirected climate protection strategies - like the massive use of agro-energy to cover high-energy consumption - threaten the food security and development of many developing countries.

The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it, and all who live in it (Psalm 24:1). This biblical promise places human beings in a community with all other creatures and obliges people to face the world in a spirit of awe, shape it so as to turn it into an inhabitable place and maintain it as such a place (Genesis 2:15). The biblical statements on people being made in God's image (Genesis 1:26f) create human dignity and are based on an understanding of people as representatives of God's working in creation. God has entrusted his people with dominion as stewardship - not domination - over creation. The vision of a sustainable civilisation in harmony with the Earth meets this fundamental element of biblical theology. Human dignity and the common good, love of one's neighbour and justice, freedom and solidarity are all coordinates of Christian social ethics for a sustainable civilisation.

There is an urgent need to devise a production system that would respond to human necessities and which is also in harmony with the Earth as God's creation. In this the limits of the ecosystem need to be respected and combined with equity, including our solidarity with future generations. This urges us to strive for *climate justice*. CEC and CLAI are committed to intensify their respective activities in this area.

CEC and CLAI are dismayed by the failure of a number of governments to acknowledge their historic responsibility for climate change. They have failed to take responsibility for agreeing to a set of consistent goals in order to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases to save the climate and life on Earth. A task of the churches is to alert citizens to the consequences of our actions, including the consequences of our lifestyle, and to work on our own contributions to reduce contamination of the environment.

The Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change in December 2009 failed to make legally binding commitments to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions to keep the temperature rise in check. Copenhagen was a missed opportunity. However, it is imperative to come to a binding global institutional framework. CEC and CLAI

commit themselves to build on the mobilisation by churches and civil society over the next few years with prayers and advocacy action to reach a fair, ambitious and binding deal, which in Copenhagen was not achieved. CLAI and CEC will continue to strive for climate justice, to urge the governments of their member churches to contribute to a binding global institutional framework with ambitious and fair commitments by all countries according to joint but differentiated responsibility. CLAI and CEC encourage members of their respective churches to promote alternative lifestyles with the objective that 'the rich live more simply so that the poor can simply live.'

The atmosphere is a global and public good and is at the disposal of all people for sustainable usage. However, the atmosphere has been, and continues to be, misused as a 'dump'. In keeping with the polluter-pays principle (taking responsibility) and their respective capacity, the industrialised countries are the ones required to take over greater burdens for climate protection.

A climate protection convention enshrined in international law, verifiable and enabled to impose sanctions for the period after 2012 must therefore be based on the principle of the common but differentiated responsibility of all states. They should also guarantee a quick alignment of GHG emissions per capita at a sustainable level. It is equally necessary to reach agreements on how to internationally distribute the costs for the reduction of GHG and for adapting to the consequences of climate change.

Developing and newly industrialising countries must be supported financially and technologically to a significant extent so that they can build up a climate-friendly system of energy supply and adjust to the inexorable effects of climate change. Financing the cost of climate change and the required adaptation must not lead to a further indebtedness of the developing countries.

2.2 Development and climate protection

The way forward is to work on energy-saving solutions and on renewable energy sources and techniques. Adequate attention needs to be given also to agricultural production. Agriculture is one of the major contributors to GHG production.

Rising meat consumption and energy crops threaten food sovereignty. The sufficient production of basic foodstuffs deserves priority over the production of animal feed and energy crops. Ongoing climate change and increasing global meat consumption – coupled with the rising demand for agro-fuel – are already contributing to a worsening of food security in developing countries. States need to review and modify their policies on this issue, in order to guarantee the implementation of the

human right to food. The production and use of agro-energy must therefore meet certain criteria:

- Human food security takes priority over the production of animal feed and energy crops.
- The production of agro-energy must be socially and ecologically sustainable.
- Establishing regional value chains should take priority over trading with agro-fuels. Agro-energy should be produced to meet regional demand and should not increase the dependence of producers on the world market.
- Genetically modified plants must be excluded from the cultivation of energy crops.
- Grain must not be used as a source of agro-energy.
- The production and trade in biomass should only be allowed under strict rules with independent inspections (bio-energy certification). The certification criteria must be comprehensible and verifiable at all times and support socially and environmentally sustainable development in the producing countries.

2.3 Climate justice begins with us!

The transition from a ‘fossil age’ of seemingly limitless growth to a low-carbon, environmentally and socially sustainable global economy forces us into a critical debate with the values that have hitherto formed our lifestyle, our economy, politics and society. However, values are never abstract; they are supposed to be lived and demonstrated. Our churches will be able to engage in this value debate credibly, also as an example of our ecumenical commitment to belonging to the one worldwide body of Christ, if we set our own house in order and face up to the challenge of justice and environmental protection in a totally practical way. Also within the church there is a joint but differentiated responsibility in different contexts.

We encouraged member churches of CLAI and CEC to discover their respective fields of practical action by naming some examples from churches in Latin America and Europe. These do not provide a complete list of churches’ activities in taking care of creation. They offer a foretaste of what has been done and an inspiration for further strengthening of this work.

Cooperation, exchange of experience and mutual support between the churches from both continents, particularly on the protection of the environment, may be strongly beneficial and needs to be encouraged.

Examples of the environmental work of churches

Latin America:

- Coordinated efforts between the 'mesas nacionales del CLAI' of Peru, Bolivia and Chile with the 'Mission 21' under the motto: "Water of life for Earth as God's justice", based on the text of Amos 5:24, "Justice will flow like rivers of living water." In the next three years the initiative will continue with providing a space for reflections on climatic change and especially on water and land resources.
- In Bolivia, the CLAI member churches jointly launched the project under the title: "Unifying hands for life" (Uniendo manos por la Vida). Under the leadership of the Independent Presbyterian Church, the churches are working together on a study focusing on the impact of the residual water from mining in the department of Oruro.
- The Methodist Church in Bolivia, under the leadership of Methodist women, launched the campaign 'not to use plastic bags'. The campaign helps to raise people's awareness on environmental care, especially among church members.
- Within the Lutheran Church in Bolivia, the programme for 'care of water, no waste' is under way. The programme focuses on organising workshops and encounters at local and national levels.
- In Chile, the CLAI member churches intensively participate in governmental programmes focusing on care for the environment.
- The 'Water Encounter' in Lima (Peru), was organised with the active involvement of the Pentecostal Church. Working on protection of the environment, CLAI member churches are coordinating efforts with the local government authorities.

Examples of the environmental work of churches

Europe:

European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) is a network assisting the churches in Europe to address care for creation in a mutually supportive way throughout the continent. The following examples offer a glimpse of many initiatives in protection of the environment that churches in Europe are involved in. Other examples can be found on the web site of the respective churches, or on the web site www.ecen.org.

Germany

'Green Rooster': EMAS certification programme for congregations and church institutions according to international environmental standards. In order to utilise this potential and to practise climate protection, more than 400 parishes and church facilities throughout Germany have introduced the Green Rooster Programme. The system is based on the European Union's eco-audit regulation EMAS II/DIN ISO 14000. With the help of this system, parishes and church facilities carry out environmental and cli-

Ejemplos del trabajo ambiental de las iglesias

Germany (cont.):

mate protection in continual, verifiable steps, systematically lowering their energy consumption and involving many people in the process. (www.kirchliches-umweltmanagement.de)

'Buying the Future': Since January 2008 the buying behaviour of the churches in Germany has been the focus of the project Zukunft einkaufen (Buying the Future). The ecumenical project of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD), together with the Roman Catholic Church, is designed to prove that 'buying' climate protection is not only possible but also very effective in the light of the huge volume of goods purchased by the churches on all levels. They range from fair-trade coffee to recycled paper and even subscribing to green electricity is not the end of it. The transition from a 'fossil' age of (apparently) limitless growth to a low-carbon, environmentally and socially sustainable global economy forces us into a critical debate with the values that have hitherto formed our lifestyle, our economy, politics and society. However, values are never abstract; they are supposed to be lived – and demonstrated. (www.zukunft-einkaufen.de)

For this reason, the EKD-member churches aim to further develop church environmental management systems from projects into principles and introduce them throughout the entire church so that parishes and church facilities can experiment with sustainable and climate-friendly consumption. This also includes the introduction of binding Carbon Reduction plans for the churches. As the first EKD-member church, the Evangelical Church in Westphalia has started a binding programme to reduce its overall CO₂-emission by 40% by 2020.

– Czech Republic

Churches for the Future: 50 Solar Roofs

Demonstrating the possibilities for solar energy utilisation in parishes, centres and colleges of various churches in the Czech Republic, the Centre for Application of Renewable Energy of the Orthodox Academy in Vilemov launched this new ecumenical and environmental project in 2004. The project aims to demonstrate the possibilities for solar energy utilisation in parishes and diaconal and educational institutions of various churches in the Czech Republic. The project enjoys the particular interest of the Czech Brethren Church, Hussite Church, Silesian Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church in the Czech Republic. An important partner is the International Baptist Seminary in Prague. Czech parishes and church institutions have already submitted more than 30 applications and the Environmental Team of the Orthodox Academy has helped them with the preparation and specifications of their individual projects, energy audits and the completion of their applications according to the standards of the Czech Environmental Fund. The programme also includes the provision of seminars and lec-

Ejemplos del trabajo ambiental de las iglesias

Czech Republic (cont.):

tures about solar energy for churches and the preparation of a book containing information about the possibilities for environmental work in the church and information about the project.

– *Eco-Congregations Ireland*

An ecumenical environmental programme for churches

Eco-Congregation Ireland is part of the wider Eco-Congregation Programme, which encourages churches to become more environmentally friendly by providing resources and an award scheme. It is run as a partnership between the Church of Ireland, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and Roman Catholic Church. Churches are planting wildlife gardens, keeping bees, collecting aluminium cans for recycling, promoting ideas for a 'green Christmas', and much more.
www.ecocongregationireland.org

– *Belgium: inter-religious and philosophical approach to ecology and climate change*

Inter-religious and philosophical appeal to the UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen

All Christian churches (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant) and other religious and philosophical communities (Muslims, Buddhist, Humanist) issued a common call in view of the UN Climate Summit of December 2009 in Copenhagen under the title "Wake up! Global Warming must stop. It can!"

Cooperation between Protestant and Roman Catholic partners

The Belgian Catholic Justice and Peace Network works closely together with the United Protestant Church of Belgium on globalisation and ecology. It has published a book 'Care for the creation – an inspiration book for eco-spirituality', gives practical support to Christians to reduce their ecological footprint and makes available to churches who ask for it a professional 'energy master' to help them make an 'energy scan', which forms the basis for making church buildings energy friendly and to become real 'eco-churches'.

3. Ecological Debt

In connection with climate change, the *concept of ecological debt* was the topic of a WCC-statement adopted by the Central Committee in September 2009. CEC and CLAI have studied this document carefully. Together we underline the importance of this concept as an expression of the deep moral obligation to promote ecological justice in full awareness of the historic responsibility of the industrialised

countries for the gradual destruction of this planet. Ecological debts are owed to Mother Earth and forthcoming generations whose very futures are endangered by dominant production and consumption patterns that fail to respect the regenerative limits of our planet.

To speak of ecological debt is to demand environmental, social and economic justice. It is also a way to understand why there is wealth and poverty. It is to identify the people in charge of social and cultural deterioration and environmental global goods. It is to fight against impunity. It aims at stopping the destruction of the life of the peoples affected and their cultures. In this context, in the WCC Process on Wealth, Poverty, Ecology there are attempts to explore how a *people's court for ecological debts* could give voice to the victims of ecological debts and hold accountable those responsible. CEC and CLAI encourage their member churches to support and participate actively in this WCC Process, together with movements and organisations, in the preparation and follow-up.

For the churches and their spiritual understanding of the interrelatedness of God's sustaining justice, and justice and sustainability within and among peoples, the concept of eco-justice and ecological debt opens a space for committed spiritual reflection and action. It offers ample opportunities to address the personal dimension as well and to focus on the issue of a necessary paradigm shift in lifestyle. CLAI and CEC encourage their member churches to deepen the theological and spiritual reflection and joint action within the Latin American and European member churches, as well as in joint partnership relations and future cooperation.

To make the concept applicable in the international political arena, it is vital to identify and develop precise criteria for ecological debts. This includes differentiation between different ecological 'creditors' and 'debtors' worldwide, not only between the North and the South, but also within countries of the North and the South, including emerging economies.

The *concept of ecological debt* is an important approach to expand climate justice beyond the dimension of the impacts of carbon emission. In its focus on debt, it is compatible with the concept of the ecological footprint, defined as a measure of human demand on the Earth's ecosystem, comparing human over-consumption with planet Earth's ecological capacity to regenerate. In this context the Green House Development Rights (GDR) scheme could be of help. The approach is geared toward climatic policy, but can be adapted to all environmental burdens that cross national borders. It puts the principle into action that all states have *common but differentiated responsibilities* (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Art. 3.1) in accordance with clearly defined universal criteria. A concept of resource justice involving both a *right to development* and an *obligation of sustainability*, as ex-

emplified in the GDR approach, is politically feasible. CEC and CLAI commit themselves and ask their member churches to support the process of developing a strategy to further develop the concept of ecological debt to make it compatible with concepts applicable in the political arena in the context of the United Nations.

Example of ecological debt in the context of Central and Eastern Europe

Prior to 1989, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were occupied for decades by the Soviet Army. Environmental damage caused by a reckless and disdainful attitude towards nature was not limited to the location of their garrisons. The environment, and in this case especially the soil, was damaged by the dumping of oil products in such a way that has required special cleaning operations by expert teams taking a significant amount of time. The costs of the removal of this environmental damage cannot be repaid by the perpetrators because either they no longer exist or they refuse to even consider such a possibility. Some of the costs of removal have been borne by the European Union. However, most of this damage will continue to persist for a generation or more.

4. Illegitimate Debts

External debt is one of the root causes preventing a just and sustainable development of indebted countries especially in the developing world. CEC and CLAI and their member churches have committed themselves to external debt relief and to the cancellation of illegitimate debts for many years. In 2005, CLAI hosted an international conference on illegitimate debts in Buenos Aires to further develop the debate within the churches, as well as in the international political arena including the field of international law. In the meantime, CEC member churches in Norway and Germany have taken this issue forward by challenging their governments on concrete cases of illegitimate debts on the basis of the odious debt doctrine. In the case of Norway, the government in the meantime has written off part of the debts they had claimed from Ecuador, Peru and Jamaica. CEC and CLAI see the fight against illegitimate debt as part of the struggle for the further development of an international independent court for just and transparent arbitration on external debt.

According to the classical doctrine of odious debts, demands for repayment on debts incurred by a non-democratic government, without the consent of and contrary to the interests of the people, are ineffective if the lender was aware of these defects. Precedents from state practice and the work of the International Law Commission during the codification of the Law of State Succession imply general recog-

dition of this principle of non-assumption of odious debts in the event of a state succession. These legal consequences also arise out of a simple change of government or other cases of government succession. The non-assumption of specific illegitimate debts is based not so much on the intensity of the change in the person of the debtor, but rather the knowledge on the part of the lender of the illegitimacy of the debts resulting from the character of the regime and the use of the resources. The *Tinoco* precedent, the central international law decision on the odious debts doctrine, displays very clearly that the doctrine is based on general legal principles. This includes not only the principle of good faith, the prohibition on abuse of rights, the 'clean hands' doctrine, the fundamental principle of public order and the bans on deceit, fraud, coercion and corruption, but also fundamental elements that make repayment entitlements for illegitimate debts, in the sense of the odious debts doctrine, more difficult or impossible.

Furthermore, the notion of 'odious debts' may be extended to debts incurred for a purpose contrary to the core values of public international law. Debts incurred for purposes contrary to the basic values of the public international legal system or which contradict the interests of the people to a degree that constitutes a violation of the general principle of good faith must be qualified as dubious. If a lender knew or ought to have known about the character of the contract or treaty partner at the time of contracting the debts, then it is plausible for that party to lose its entitlement to repayment of the original debt based on general principles of law.

CEC and CLAI commit themselves to continue to fight for the overcoming of illegitimate debts and encourage their member churches to identify cases in order to bring this process forward to make a difference for the victims as well as for the development of a just international law system ensuring future rights of the peoples.

Example of illegitimate debt cancellation

Approximately NOK 2.9 billion of the debt owed by developing countries to Norway (including accrued interest) was related to the Norwegian Ship Export Campaign (1976-80), under which Norway exported 156 vessels and ship's equipment totalling NOK 3.7 billion to 21 countries.

The campaign was financed through the Norwegian Guarantee Institute for Export Credits (GIEK) of the general guarantee scheme and its old special scheme for developing countries. A great many of these projects proved to be economically unsustainable, so that government guarantees were triggered and the Norwegian government became the creditor.

In 1988-89, the government conducted an evaluation of the Ship Export Campaign, in which the campaign was criticised for inadequate needs analyses and risk assessments. The main conclusion was that this kind of campaign should not be repeated. A little more than NOK 1.1 billion of this debt had been cancelled previously, primarily in connection with Norway's follow-up to the debt relief initiative for the poorest countries.

It was then generally agreed that the Ship Export Campaign was a development policy failure. As creditor, Norway shares part of the responsibility for the resulting debts. By cancelling these claims, Norway agrees that Ecuador, Egypt, Jamaica, Peru and Sierra Leone no longer are obligated to service the remainder of these debts.

See: www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Documents/Reports-programmes-of-action-and-plans/Reports/2006/Cancellation-of-debts-incurred-as-a-result-of-the-Norwegian-Ship-Export-Campaign-1976-80.html?id=420457

5. Hunger and food crisis

Disturbing trends

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), poverty and hunger affects more than 1 billion persons on the globe. The FAO figures show that hunger has been on the rise ever since the late 1990s. Children, youth, women and indigenous peoples, small farmers and fisher folk, small scale producers and people with disabilities are the most affected. Due to rapidly rising food prices in 2008, the number of hungry people increased dramatically by hundreds of millions of people. Since 2007, the FAO food price index went up by 53%. Prices of staple foods have risen even more. The price of wheat, for example, increased by 140% while corn prices went up by 40%. The food crisis affected 37 countries. Poor people who live on less than US\$2 a day, and who have to spend 80% of their income on food, were the hardest hit. In many of the affected countries, poor people took to the streets in

food revolts. Often they were joined by people from the middle class who also saw their purchasing power decrease as a result of the increasing food prices.

Hunger is primarily the result of poverty and injustice and not the result of insufficient food production. This is visible in the countryside of poor and developing countries, in the 'comedores' in Latin America and in the long rows in front of the soup kitchens in some of the Northern countries.

Soaring international food prices have only in part been caused by the poor harvest in Australia (due to droughts, possibly as a result of climate change), the increasing demand for animal food in Asia, or the price hike in fossil-based petrol. Other important causes were agricultural commodity speculation and unfair competition on global agricultural markets.

The economic reform conditionalities attached to the aid packages of donors and to loans of international financial institutions have driven developing countries to privatise state marketing boards and agricultural services, open up their agricultural markets and single-mindedly invest in export-oriented agriculture. This often leads to mono-cropping which reduces agricultural biodiversity, deteriorates the quality of the soil and is, therefore, basically unsustainable from an ecological point of view. In addition, local farmers, in some notorious instances, have been driven out of their jobs by food imports that were dumped on their markets by exporters from rich industrialised parts of the world.

Many governments of developing countries affected by the food crisis have cut import tariffs on staple foods instead of increasing support for local farmers and passing price incentives on to them. While these actions are intended to benefit urban consumers, they are short-sighted as they decrease the food security and the food sovereignty of their own countries and regions.

The above-mentioned trends have been exacerbated by the production of agro-fuels, which in many cases replaces the production of food for local markets and the land used to produce it, encourages deforestation, is not produced in an environmentally-friendly way and which, in certain cases, puts more strain on the environment than other energy sources. The increase in oil prices has made farming practices which rely on energy-intensive inputs more expensive and the use of biomass more profitable than the production of food. In addition, focusing on agro-fuels is a highly inefficient way to reduce GHG emissions in the transport sector.

Yet another cause for concern is the leasing of large portions of land by certain countries for agricultural production by foreign countries and/or their corporations ('land grabbing'). Although such practices may enhance the food security of foreign countries, they may have devastating effects on food production for local markets. In addition, tenants, smallholders, pastoralists and indigenous peoples are forced

off their lands and are driven from their homes, thereby seriously threatening their very livelihoods.

Current often wasteful production and consumption patterns in industrialised countries are not sustainable. Merely increasing yields or land use efficiency will not make production more sustainable; the consumption patterns and lifestyles of the rich need to change as well. Hunger in the South cannot be reduced without addressing abundance in affluent countries.

Meat consumption in particular is responsible for the use of a large proportion of the world's arable land for animal feed instead of food for human consumption. The production of food calories from animal sources uses a much greater share of land and water than the production of food calories from plant sources. Bovine meat, moreover, is adding considerably to the emission of GHG.

The need to rethink global food policies

The current food crisis has been used by different stakeholders to advance their respective interests. Those who believe that the laws of supply and demand will deliver development argue that only by liberalising markets will food supplies increase and become more affordable. Others maintain that food is not just any commodity that can be bought and sold on 'free markets' because people's lives depend on it. They argue that world markets cannot be relied upon if one wants to combat hunger and achieve food security.

According to CLAI and CEC, there is an urgent need for a rigorous political, economic and normative rethink of the very logic of food policies that has led to the food crisis and to the persistent phenomenon of hunger that we have witnessed over the past decades. Such an exercise should include the following considerations:

- Food security objectives should have absolute precedence over energy security objectives. The production of agro-fuel maintains the prevailing capitalist system, emphasising financial gain instead of human needs. By the same token, the production of agro-fuel should give primacy to considerations of food security and ecological sustainability.
- Providers of food aid should aim at buying food on local and regional markets rather than using their domestic surpluses.
- Intellectual property rights of age-old agricultural products should be secured and should not fall prey to big agricultural companies.
- Governments should follow the FAO and recognise 'the right to food'. This principle should also be included as one of the foundations of the World

Trade Organisation (as a counterweight to the prevailing trade liberalisation ideology).

- Government policies should respect the land rights of indigenous peoples as well as the interest of the small farmers who have tilled their lands for generations but have insecure legal land titles.
- The main food producers in the world are women. Agricultural research should draw on the expertise built up over the centuries by local farmers, many of whom are women. Their understanding of how to manage biodiversity in their existing social and environmental context is key to sustainable farming methods.

CEC and CLAI call on the governments of Latin America to devise and implement policies which give priority to the food security of poor people in urban and rural areas. We call on countries of the European Union to re-assess the Common Agricultural Policy in the light of its social and environmental effects and to refrain from policies which threaten the food security and livelihoods of poor people in the South. Nothing less than a radical rethink of the current politico-economic and agricultural paradigms is necessary if the world is to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal, i.e. to reduce the number of people suffering from hunger by 400 million by 2020.

6. Water as a global challenge and a human right

Water is a prerequisite for all life. Without water there is no life. To have or not to have access to water is a matter of life and death. Water is a gift which God provides for everyone for life in its fullness and for responsible use. Therefore, water in principle is a common good, which cannot be privatised.

Water has a spiritual meaning. Water is not only an asset but it has a social, cultural, medical, religious and mystical meaning. Already in the creation story the Bible says: "... the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2). Through Moses, God provided his people with water during their pilgrimage through the desert. For us Christians the symbolic power of water as a source of life is deeply connected with baptism: "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved" (Mark 16:16).

CEC and CLAI are members of the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN)⁷, the network of churches and Christian organisations promoting people's access to water around the world. Together we commit ourselves to ensure a common Christian witness is heard in the debate on water issues, to protect water as a gift of God, to promote community-based initiatives and solutions to overcome the water crisis and to advocate for water as a human right at the local, regional and international levels.

CLAI and CEC with its member churches and specialised organisations are committed together to defend the right to water as was demonstrated recently at a conference on Latin America under the theme 'Water for Life and Creation' in Lima, Peru, 23-25 November 2009, organised by EWN and CLAI.

In the 21st century the availability of drinking water and water for other purposes will become one of the central challenges of development and human rights. The damage of ecosystems which are essential for sustainable water supply, high per capita water consumption through unsustainable lifestyles, the growing total population, inadequate water management, the destruction of forests, water pollution, waste of water, growing consumption of water for industrial purposes and especially for water-intensive farming are major factors of the water crisis. Today more than 70% of available water is being consumed by (often ineffective) irrigated agriculture. Climate change will deepen the water crisis dramatically. Water on a global scale will become a scarce good. Its future distribution on the national as well as international level will lead increasingly to conflicts.

Today 1.1 billion people are living without equitable access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion people are excluded from basic sanitation. Every day, more than 6.000 people die from the consequences of a lack of drinking water and sanitation. If drastic progress is not made, it is unlikely that the Millennium Development Goal to reduce the number of people without access to drinking water and sanitation by half by 2015 will be achieved. According to UN statistics, by 2050 more than 50% of the then 9 billion people on Earth will live in cities. Especially with regard to the fast-growing megacities, it will require enormous efforts to provide the necessary infrastructure for drinking water and sanitation.

The scarcity of water, however, is not the heart of the global water crisis. It is rooted in power, poverty and inequality rather than in physical availability. The fast-growing demand for commercial water use (for energy, irrigation, industry)

⁷ www.oikoumene.org/ewn-home.html The position of the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) in the present debate on the right to water is well elaborated by its chairperson Michael Windfuhr (Bread for the World) in Michael Windfuhr / Danuta Sacher: The debate on 'water as a human right' and its implications for development assistance, in: Walter Scheumann (ed.) Water Politics and Development Cooperation, Heidelberg / New York 2008.

competing with the access to water for domestic use makes it essential to differentiate clearly between *the human right to water* and *water user rights*.

The United Nations Human Development Report 2006 points out that, in order to address the current scarcity of water for so many people, *water security* has to be developed as an integral part of overall human security:

“In broad terms water security is about ensuring that every person has reliable access to enough safe water at an affordable price to lead a healthy, dignified and productive life, while maintaining the ecological systems that provide water and also depend on water” (UNDP 2006:3).

CLAI and CEC fully support the fundamental human rights approach of the UNDP Report:

“Human rights are not an optional extra. Nor are they voluntary legal provisions to be embraced or abandoned on the whim of individual governments. They are binding obligations that reflect basic values and entail responsibilities on the part of governments. Yet the human right to water is violated with impunity on a widespread and systematic basis – and it is the human rights of the poor that are subject to the gravest abuse” (UNDP 2006:4).

The implementation of the human right to water requires that policy choices are discussed by using human rights norms and standards in relation to the local situation in order to overcome discrimination in access, to monitor progress as well as steps backward and to lead to policy learning at all levels of governance.

Ecumenical Declaration on water as a human right and a public good

In 2005, the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC), the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), the Swiss Conference of Bishops (CES) and the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (SEK-FEPS) jointly adopted the 'Ecumenical Declaration on water as a human right and a public good'.

The text expresses the joint concerns of churches from Europe and Latin America and underlines that water is a basic precondition for all life. Water is at the same time a human right as well as a force of faith. Water is not only an economic commodity, but it also has a social, cultural, medical, religious and mystical value.

Water is becoming scarce for many human beings. Therefore the Declaration demands that

- the human right to water be recognised at the local and international level in the same way as the right to adequate food. This right must be respected by all sectors of society;
- water must be treated as a public good;
- in terms of water consumption legal priorities need to be laid down;
- the right to water should be regulated through an international convention on water to be adopted by the UN.

The Declaration is at the same time a commitment for further work. Signatories commit themselves:

- to convince our churches, congregations, institutions, ecumenical groupings and partner organisations to support this declaration and to pray for its aims;
- together with the movements and NGOs in Brazil and Switzerland interested in these issues, to motivate public opinion, political forces and the population of our countries to work in favour of the terms set out in this declaration and to oppose privatisation;
- to lobby the governments of our countries to guarantee, through appropriate laws, the human right to water and to declare water as a public good and to work for the drawing up of an international convention on water to be adopted by the UN.

Example of a successful implementation of the human rights' approach in water policy
Uruguay

In October 2004, a plebiscite on water policy took place in Uruguay. After two years of intense sensitisation and campaigning work of a broad civil society alliance formed by a diversity of environmental and social groups, trade unions, academic and religious groups, a proposal for a constitutional reform concerning water was submitted to the general popular vote. With the support of 64.7% of all registered voters, Article 47 of the Uruguayan constitution was modified in the sense of introducing explicitly the concept of the human right to water. Beside the general affirmation that access to water and to sanitation is a human right, it is stated that water must be managed in a sustainable and solidary way in consideration of future generations and the hydrological cycle, that user and civil society participation must be guaranteed at all levels of planning, management and control of water resources, that water management should be organised along regions and watershed areas, prioritising human needs, that water supply management systems must be ruled by social welfare principles in the first place before economic ones. The constitutional reform confirms also that water has to be managed in a public trust and explicitly excludes the privatisation of water supply services.

The new Uruguayan constitutional paragraphs, by inferring more concrete and unequivocal policy principles for public water policy from the right to water in the interpretation of General Comment No.15, manifest the potential of the rights' approach as a policy guiding tool and thus contribute considerably to the international discussion on rights-based legal frameworks. Today there are only a few countries left which have problems in accepting that the right to water is a human right.

The human right to water puts a focus of governments on the poor and vulnerable of society. Without measures against injustice in access to water and sanitation, there is a high risk that the interpretation of water user rights will exclude particularly vulnerable groups such as women and small farmers. This is why, in line with the Human Development Report, CEC and CLAI highlight the responsibilities of governments to act properly, including the fact that access to water and sanitation will hardly be achieved through a private measures scheme. The key is for countries to have public policies in place that help to convert the economic income increases of the country into human development results. CEC and CLAI ask their member churches to actively engage in the EWN advocacy work for the right to water and to support its work by making their engagement an integral part of their witness in church and society.

See: Achkar, Marcel (2006): *Una Expresión de Democracia Directa: La Comisión Nacional en Defensa del Agua y la Vida (CNDAV) y la Lucha por el Agua en Uruguay* (Stuttgart/ Germany: Bread for the World www.menschen-recht-wasser.de)

Conclusion

The experience gained in the dialogue and the trust developed give reason to hope for a continuation. Questions raised already at this stage are: Can we define together joint programmes empowering civil society, to think anew the role of the Church in a prophetic and contextual way? Can we create a strategic alliance between CEC and CLAI? These are challenges for the next stage of the joint process.

Witnessing to our Christian faith requires us to offer spiritual and practical resistance to economic injustice and ecological destruction and to do everything we can to promote an economy in the service of life, both globally and in our own respective countries, in Latin America as well as in Europe. To this end, our spirituality needs to be deepened and our lives transformed, as promised by Jesus Christ.

In order to be able to do so, we have a special source of power, a prayer that spans the entire world: the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is the common prayer expressing the special identity of the worldwide community of Jesus Christ as a new human community.

In this context, the fourth and fifth requests are particularly important and can guide us in our joint commitment and engagement:

"Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us"

(Matthew 6:11–12).

"Give us this day our daily bread."

The request is an expression of the fact that the resources we obtain for our daily lives are a gift from God. He gives us what we need and we are accountable to him for the way we handle these resources. God ensures the survival of all of humanity. Thus, the expression "our bread" reminds us not only of the obligation of all Christians to share all resources and make sure that economic justice prevails. It also signals our responsibility to fight injustice wherever it occurs. 'Our bread' is 'bread for

the world'. It must not be accumulated and amassed in the hands of a few at the expense of others.

For Christians in the 21st century, the fourth request is a constant reminder of their responsibility to contribute to sustainable economic justice for all people. Christians all over the world should do so according to their wealth and the talents with which they have been endowed – individually and as communities – both in their own society and in international economic relationships.

Since the early days of the church, Christians have related the fourth request for their daily bread with the celebration of Holy Communion. Jesus chooses bread, the most common food of his time, on which the survival of humanity depends, and wine, the symbol of fullness of life and celebration, as the sign of his presence as the risen Lord among his people. He does not only want to physically preserve the community of his followers but also to give a sense of direction to their lives. Time and again, he supplies them with God's forgiveness and gives them the power to facilitate fundamental change in human relationships. In sharing bread and wine, we participate in the fullness of life, for which Jesus Christ gave his life. At the same time, he engages us in his service of life.

This also irrevocably obliges CEC and CLAI, together with their member churches, to commit themselves to resolutely work towards a just and fair international economic order in which no one has to starve and all can live a life in dignity and fullness.

“And forgive us our sins.”

The fifth request convinces us of the fact that Christians who have experienced God's forgiveness in its deepest form have powerful resources enabling them to contribute to peace and justice in human relationships. In order for the churches to make a useful contribution to globalisation with a human face, we have to confess our guilt and trust in God's forgiveness, made real in Holy Communion. At the same time, the fifth request reminds us how closely the forgiveness of sins is related to debt release: “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” is also a possible translation of the fifth request. In the Bible there is a strong stream giving witness to God's liberating power. God is setting people free from their bondage and enslavement. The year of Jubilee is but one of the many biblical traditions giving witness to the fact that God's forgiving and liberating power aims at the renewal of human relations among each other as well as in relation to the rest of nature.

The request, *“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us,”* guides CEC and CLAI in their joint commitment, stemming from their dialogue, to face the challenges of (1) Climate Justice, (2) Eco-

logical Debt, (3) Illegitimate Debts, (4) the Hunger and Food Crisis and (5) the Human Right to Water.

As we share in the bread and wine in the presence of the risen Christ, we partake of God's transforming power and hence we are taken into the divine service of life.

God wants everybody to have life in its fullness. This nurtures our hope. Trusting in this promise, the Lord's Prayer ends:

"For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, forever and ever. Amen."

Members of the joint Task Force

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