



For action

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ISSUES SUB-COMMITTEE

The public issues sub-committee met under the leadership of Bishop Susan Johnson, moderator, and Ms Gloria Don Lam Len, rapporteur.

Actions on Public Issues

The public issues sub-committee received the document PUB 02 Actions on Public Issues, summarizing relevant actions taken since those reported at the central committee meeting on 21-27 June 2023. The sub-committee expresses appreciation for the important work done, and commends the compilation to the executive committee for information.

Statement on War in Palestine and Israel (PUB 03 rev)

Following the attacks by Hamas militants on 7 October 2023 and in light of the ongoing Israeli armed forces' response in Gaza, the sub-committee received, discussed and revised texts for a statement on the matter. The sub-committee commends the resulting draft statement to the executive committee for adoption.

Statement on Consequences of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh (PUB 04 rev)

Following the events of 19-20 September in Nagorno-Karabakh, and in light of the report of the WCC delegation visit to Armenia on 18-22 September 2023, the sub-committee received, discussed and revised a text for a statement on consequences of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The sub-committee commends the resulting draft statement to the executive committee for adoption.

Statement on COP28's Responsibility for Climate Justice (PUB 05 rev)

In view of the forthcoming 28th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), and in light of the accelerating climate crisis, the sub-committee received, discussed and revised a text for a statement on COP28's responsibility for climate justice. The sub-committee commends the resulting draft statement to the executive committee for adoption.

Statement on Nigeria in the Regional Context of Africa (PUB 06 rev)

On the occasion of its meeting in Nigeria, and in light of information received from Nigerian church leaders and partners – especially as presented during a panel discussion on 9 November 2023 – the sub-committee received, discussed and revised a text for a statement on Nigeria in the regional context of Africa. The sub-committee commends the resulting draft statement and commends it to the executive committee for adoption.

Other issues

Open letter on the conflict in Palestine and Israel

In addition to the statement on this matter, the sub-committee also received a proposal for an open letter by the executive committee – an exceptional modality in terms of the usual procedures of the

sub-committee and the executive committee. While the sub-committee considers that the proposal for an open letter or letters to UN Security Council and General Assembly members and to WCC member churches has merit, the sub-committee believes that these different audiences may require different types of letters. In any event, the sub-committee lacked the time to complete a revision of the proposal received, and therefore *recommends that the executive committee refer the matter to the general secretary for appropriate action.*

Ukraine

The sub-committee received a request for a statement on the current situation in Ukraine, especially in view of concerns for social cohesion and freedom of religion or belief in the country. Time did not permit the development of a new text on this issue. However, the sub-committee commends the general secretary and staff for the work which has been and continues to be undertaken on this important matter.

Freedom of religion or belief concerns

The sub-committee also received a proposal on concerns for freedom of religion or belief, especially in light of the current situation and experiences in India. However, the sub-committee lacked the time to consider this proposal. It is *recommended that the executive committee request the general secretary consider appropriate action on these issues.*

African regional concerns

During discussion in the sub-committee it was acknowledged that, beyond Nigeria, there are many current situations of critical concern in the region which warrant attention by the executive committee and the WCC. In particular, the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Sudan after seven months of internal conflict was lifted up, together with the proliferation of military coups in several countries in the region. While the sub-committee lacked the time to develop a new text on these issues, relevant references were incorporated in the draft statement on Nigeria.

Members of the Public Issues Sub-Committee

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Rev. Prof. Dr Fernando ENNS

Very Rev. Mikhail GOUNDIAEV

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