

# **Policy on Indian Churches' Engagement in Eco - justice Ministries**

*(Adopted by Resolution # EC: 2010. 28 (9) of the Honorable  
Executive Committee of the NCCI on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2010)*



Developed by

**The Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN INDIA**

**Policy on Indian Churches' Engagement in Eco-justice Ministries :**  
Published by Dr. Roger Gaikwad, General Secretary,  
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## *Contents*

Message from the President	.....	i
Foreword	.....	iii
Introduction and Acknowledgement	.....	v
Policy Document	.....	1
Introduction	.....	1
Scope	.....	2
Perspectives	.....	2
Environmental Injustice:		
Voices from the Margins	.....	4
Climate Change and Global Warming .....		4
Jal, Jamin and Jungle	.....	5
Poverty and Food Sovereignty	.....	6
Mining	.....	6
Faith Reflection on		
Environmental Injustice	.....	8
Churches' Engagement in		
Eco-justice Ministries	.....	10
Core Group	.....	11
Appendix 1 :- Shillong Declaration	.....	12
Appendix 2 :- CCA Policy	.....	19
Appendix 3 :- WCC AGAPE ASIA	.....	27
Appendix 4 :- World Environment Day	.....	35
Appendix 5 :- Creation Day	.....	39

## **President's Message**

*Dear Ecumenical Colleagues and Eco-justice activists,*

Green Greetings!

I feel so fortunate and proud to write this introduction to Asia's first initiative of making the Policy on Indian Churches' Engagement in Eco-justice Ministries. The Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation put in all its hard work and identified able and committed people in bringing this important, relevant and appropriate document. The development of this policy inscripts a landmark feat for NCCI in its centenary expedition cranium for linking its constituent cohorts in addressing the Eco-justice issues in India and around the globe. NCCI's initiatives during the years have been in the form of creating awareness, Advocacy, Campaigns, Trainings, Workshops and Capacity building through Churches, Regional Councils, Theological Colleges and Seminaries, Sunday Schools, Youth and Women's Fellowships and National Ecumenical Organisations, assuring synergy of wherewithal in Church and other sectors to counter neo-developmental, anti-environmental and globalization cross-learnings and cross fertilization for better cooperation from Love, Justice and Peace perspective, developing resources, Sunday school curriculum, Bible Study Materials and Text books and other related publications and networking with other stakeholders which includes engaging with the followers of different faiths.

I personally appeal to all the NCCI Member Churches and other constituent members to consider the importance of the concerns and implement and mainstream the policy through all your ministries. My vision is that this effort will go beyond Churches and Christianity towards the establishment of 'Reign of God'.

As a Chairperson I personally congratulate, appreciate and thank Rev. R. Christopher Rajkumar, Executive Secretary, Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation and the Team which put in all its efforts to articulate this policy and to the Honorable Members of the General Body of the NCCI for their approval and adoption for implementation.

- Global Warming is humanity's greatest historical challenge
- Climate Change increases global poverty and inequity
- Tackling climate change is the responsibility and an opportunity for the Churches at large

Without Eco-justice No Liberation

Without Liberation No Eco-justice

Ecologically Yours,  
**Bishop Taranath S. Sagar**  
President - NCCI

## Foreword

'Environmental Pollution', 'Deforestation', 'Carbon Footprint', 'Global Warming', 'Green House Effect', 'Non Biodegradable Waste', 'Dangers of Nuclear Plants', 'Climate Change', and the like are all very familiar term in our times. We talk about such phenomena and express our anxiety about the future of the earth, but do nothing about it. There is an increasing frequency of natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, cyclones, tornados, etc. but we seem to passive spectators of these happenings on electronic media, without being roused to critically examine the signs of the times.

The Bible begins with a description of God's 'good' creation and concludes with yet another description of a new heaven and a new earth. As Christians we talk about the reign of God on earth and the fullness of life which Jesus came to facilitate, but we have not given sufficient attention to the responsibilities which the Gospel of Jesus Christ demands of the disciples. We need to recapture the biblical understanding of the human stewardship of God's creation.

At the same time we have to realize that stewardship is to be carried out, not in some idyllic context, but in a situation where political and economic super-powers tend to be obsessed with their consumerist pleasures and self-centred privileges while promoting their own developmental projects, and are unmindful of justice issues. Injustice is done to the weak, the people on the margins, be they the poor, indigenous people, dalits,

women, or for that matter, even mother earth (with all her rivers, forests, mountains, birds, animals, etc.) who become victims of the ways of the rich and the powerful. They suffer from problems related to loss of (home)land, livelihood, food security, health security, etc. Therefore stewardship of earth has to be integrated with justice. Hence the term, 'eco-justice'.

Churches need to articulate their understanding of God's concerns for our times, give it the shape of a guiding policy and act upon it. In order to facilitate this process, the Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation of the National Council of Churches in India launched a 'Campaign for Climate Justice' on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009. The fruit of this campaign was the bringing out of a policy on eco-justice as a kind of guideline for all churches and church-related bodies by 16<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

In our endeavour to make this policy on eco-justice widely known and to encourage the churches to act upon it, this booklet is being published by the Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation of the National Council of Churches in India. May it stir us all to responsible living and action, as individuals and as churches.

**Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad**  
General Secretary, NCCI

### ***Introduction and Acknowledgement***

*Eco-Justice* links ecological sustainability with social justice from ethical, theological and ministerial perspectives. Eco-justice is defined as the well-being and holistic growth of the entire earth. It is engaged in responding to the massive, sobering evidence that nature imposes limits to production and consumption, with profound implications for distributive justice, and limits to the human numbers sustainable by habitat earth. This policy includes contributions from the leading Indian Christian Theologians and Activists of the eco-justice movement, as it recounts the evolution of the Indian Churches' Engagement in Eco-justice Ministries, initiated by the Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation of the National Council of Churches in India. In fact it is the first of such efforts in the Asian region, and I consider it as an exemplary work which is timely and relevant.

On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation launched the 'Campaign for Climate Justice'. Bishop Dr. Taranath S. Sagar, President - NCCI launched the campaign by planting a 'Climate Justice' tree in the NCCI Campus. As part of the campaign, Mr. A. Samuel Jeyakumar (then Chairperson of the Commission) inaugurated a 'Climate Choir', His Grace Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, Bishop of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church and Executive Committee Member of the NCCI, released the Ten Commandments for Climate Justice, while Rev. Moses Jeyakumar, then General Secretary of the Church of South India, symbolically received the same, as to take it to the Churches.

As a follow-up, in association with the Student Christian Movement of India and Urban Rural Mission, a Workshop on 'Youth for Eco-justice' was organized in Bhopal during 24 -26<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2009. In partnership with the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, a Workshop for Pastors was organized in Tenali, Andhra Pradesh on 10<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2009. A training programme was next organized on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2010 in association with the Coastal Poor Network in Port Blair, Andaman Islands.

Meanwhile, the Christian Conference of Asia's Programme Committee on Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service organized its II Asian Ecumenical Consultation on 'Ecology, Economics and Accountability' at Salatiga, Indonesia from 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2009 where I was invited to present the Indian Country Report. As part of the recommendation from the conference, it was proposed to develop an Eco-justice policy for all National Councils of Churches. NCC India took the recommendation seriously and involved in developing the Policy on Indian Churches' Engagement in Eco-justice Ministries.

It was shared among the Commissioners of Justice, Peace and Creation, NCCI, and the Commission zealously flagged off the proposal. This initiative was supported by the CCA JID. A five-member team was formed, which met once physically and several times had virtual meetings online, and finalized the policy and recommended the same to the Executive Committee for receiving it and adopting it and granting permission to circulate. After over 6 months' work on the policy

document, on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2010, the honorable Executive Committee received the same and resolved to circulate it among constituent members for their reviews and comments. In the light of the comments, the Policy was revised accordingly and made available to the churches in India [cf. EC: 2010:28(9) of Executive Committee Meeting on 16th September 2010].

The CCA-JID, as mentioned earlier, has also been committed to Eco-justice ministries. The 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the CCA, which met during 15<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> April 2010 in Kuala Lumpur, adopted a Climate Justice Policy for Churches in the Asian Continent. Since the NCC India also has such policy, the CCA JID held its III Asian Ecumenical Consultation on 'Ecology, Economics and Accountability' from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2010 in Bangalore, India which was organized by the NCCI CJPC. The NCCI CJPC shared its expertise with the Asian Ecumenical Communities for strategizing CCA's policy, and motivated the other Asian NCCs to develop a policy for themselves and to implement the same.

As part of the implementation process of the Policy, the NCCI CJPC, in association with the All India Sunday School Association held a 3-day 'Christian Educators' Round Table' from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2010, and developed Sunday School Curricula for Beginner, Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior departments. Thus it was incorporated into the AISSA curriculum, and followed by all the constituent units of AISSA. We hope to develop at least 1000 Green Sunday Schools by 2013.

In partnership with the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (University), a 3-day workshop was organized from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Nov. 2010. Twenty-five Theological Educators, from the Senate-affiliated theological institutions from all over India and Sri Lanka, participated in this workshop. Since the Senate of Serampore College had already developed a syllabus on 'Green Theology', this workshop mostly dealt with the pedagogical issues and motivated the theological educators to mainstream the eco-justice perspective. It was also suggested to make theological institutions stand out as 'Green Seminaries'.

Every year the NCCI CJPC initiates the 'Ecologically Yours', 'Earth Day', 'Creation Day' and 'World Environment Day' Campaigns and facilitates the constituent members in observing the same and becoming stronger 'eco-justice conscious communities'. Especially during Lent, the 'Greening the Cross' campaign impacts several hundred local congregations. Along with these, the Commission has also been engaged in popularizing 'Ten Commandments for Eco-justice' Campaign, and eco-justice focused Poster and T-Shirt campaigns.

With these words, as Executive Secretary for the Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation of the National Council of Churches in India, I express my sincere thanks to the Rt. Rev. Dr. Taranath S. Sagar, President NCCI and other officers of NCCI, Mr. Samuel Jeyakumar, then Chairperson of the CJPC, and other Commissioners of CJPC, and all the Executive and General Body Members for all their support.

I also want to place on record my grateful appreciation to the Core-group members: Rev. Dr. M. J. Joseph, Convener Ecological Commission of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church; Rev. Dr. P. B. M. Basaiawmoit, Vice-President - NCCI and Chairperson of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Presbyterian Church in India; Rev. Dr. Ivy Singh, ordained minister of the CSI and Professor and Head of the Theology and Ethics Department at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary; Rev. Dr. Rajula Annie Watson, an ordained Minister of the Church of South India, and Professor of Christian Education at the Karnataka Theological College; Dr. George Zachariah, Professor and Head (in-charge) of Theology and Ethics Department at the Gurukul Theological College and Research Institute; and, Rev. Asir Ebenezer, the then officiating General Secretary NCCI for their invaluable committed effort and contribution in developing the policy document.

A special word of thanks goes to Rev. Dr. Guillermo Kerber, Programme Executive, Care for Creation and Climate Justice of the World Council of Churches, the CCA Climate Justice Core Group members and Dr. Caesar D'Mello - the then Director of Ecumenical Coalition for Tourism. Rev. Freddy De Alwis, then Executive Secretary of Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service Department of the Christian Conference of Asia, deserves particular mention for the constant support and encouragement made available, not only in developing but also in implementing this policy with financial assistance. On behalf of the NCCI Officers and the CJPC Commissioners I would like to

express my gratitude to them. Let me also thank all my colleagues for their contributions in mainstreaming and integrating eco-justice concerns in their programmes. So also, I thank Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad, General Secretary - NCCI for his leadership and support.

At last, it is my sincere plea to each and everyone: “Let this Policy document not gather dust in your bookshelves and library as a research and reference document, but make use of it in all your ministerial activities. Let this document be a tool for ecological liberation!”

Ecologically yours,  
**Rev. R. Christopher Rajkumar**  
Executive Secretary,  
Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation,  
National Council of Churches in India.



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## **Policy on Indian Churches' Engagement on Eco-Justice Ministries**

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### **Introduction**

The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) the quintessence of the ecumenical space created by the protestant and orthodox churches in India seeks to enlarge the frontiers of ecumenism by challenging, enabling, and accompanying the churches and Christian movements in India in order to engage in relevant Christian witnessing in our context.

Learning from each other and nudging each other along domains different from familiar ones, the NCCI constituents are helped to look at issues ecumenically and contextually through the eyes of the excluded, those peoples and persons who are historically deprived and sociologically disadvantaged and thus pushed to the margins. Thus facilitated, the constituent churches, councils, organizations, and agencies launch out and surge forth with a critical outlook and life-affirming frameworks of mission engagements.

In recent times policy-making and / or policy-development is one tool through which constituents of NCCI inculcate in them the critical ecumenical outlook. Attempting to break forth from the barriers of homogeneity, monoculture and power NCCI constituents make for themselves and give unto themselves policies which guide the philosophy and praxis of given issues and states of being.

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The Policy on Churches' Engagement in Eco-justice Ministries is the second such document brought out through the NCCI Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation. A series of consultations involving church leaders, theologians, victims of ecological disasters, activists from the grassroots movements, and experts, were organized to develop this document.

### **Scope**

The NCCI Policy on Churches' Engagement in Eco-justice Ministries reflects the voice of 30 Member Churches, 17 Regional Christian Councils, 7 related agencies, 3 Autonomous Bodies and 17 All India Christian Organizations, spread across India, as an affirmation of their faith resolve to engage in relevant eco-justice ministries to address the ecological crises that we face in our context. As a Policy, it will help the member churches/organizations/councils to problematize the ecological crises in India differently informed by the voices from the margins, to reflect upon the Christian vocation in the context of environmental injustice, and to develop relevant forms of Christian witnessing in solidarity with like-minded communities and social movements.

### **Perspectives**

The churches' engagement in eco-justice ministries in India should begin with a radical shift in our very perception of the ecological crises by discerning the problem as environmental injustice. This discernment

stems from the everyday living experiences of the majority of the Indian Christians the indigenous people, Adivasis, dalits and women. An alternative prognosis of the environmental crises which exposes the integral connection between the prevailing structural injustices such as casteism, economic injustice, patriarchy, and the environmental crisis will demand alternative forms of eco-justice ministries committed to bring about radical transformation in our social and ecological relations. Such prognosis exposes the sinfulness of our prevailing social order which forces the marginalized communities to face the ecological crisis disproportionately.

A new problematization of the environmental crisis will challenge and inspire the churches in India to develop alternative ways of addressing the problem. Conservationism, the dominant paradigm of environmental engagement, will not only cover up the justice issue from our environmental discourses and praxis, but also will perpetuate the prevailing unjust social relations that destroy the lives and livelihoods of the subaltern communities through environmental injustice. It is in this context that we need to affirm the agency of the subaltern communities and their social movements in developing alternative ecological visions and praxis. Their traditional knowledge systems and practices which affirm the interconnection between ecological integrity and social justice are great resources in our search for relevant eco-justice ministries.



## **Environmental Injustice: Voices from the Margins**

Problematizing the ecological crises at the interface of unjust socio-economic relations and practices of exclusion begins from the voices from the margins. The polyphonic voices that emerge from the peripheries contest the dominant perceptions of the ecological crises, and propose alternative ways of seeing and understanding the crises. The narratives and analysis given below are attempts in this direction to discern the ecological crises as environmental injustice informed by the silenced voices.

### ***Climate change and Global warming***

*“It is time to say loudly that the crisis is not really about climate. It is not about rising sea levels and the melting arctic, dead seals and polar bears facing extinction. It is about us, our lives, and the planet and the way the powerful and rich of the Earth have dominated and kept destroying them for centuries, to accumulate private wealth.” Mausam*

Climate change and global warming are caused by the colonization of the atmospheric common. The subaltern communities are denied of their right to atmospheric common and the powerful nations and the powerful within the developing nations continue to extract from the atmospheric common disproportionately. In that process they have emitted and continue to emit

greenhouse gases beyond the capacity of the planet to withstand. However, the subaltern communities with almost zero carbon footprints are forced to bear the brunt of the consequences of global warming. India's argument that our carbon emission is linked with our right to develop raises foundational questions on the model of development that we pursue. It is a tragedy that most of the solutions that are prescribed from above such as Clean Development Mechanisms are emerging from the logic of neo-liberal capitalism, and hence detrimental to the health of the earth and its children.

### ***Jal, Jamin and Jungle***

Water, land, and forest are God's gifts and agents to keep the movement of life alive on the face of the earth. Life blossoms when these gifts and agents are protected from profit-oriented interventions. Water is becoming a precious commodity in our times. Ponds and rivers and underground water sources are being auctioned to transnational corporations to plunder for accumulating wealth. The deteriorating reserves of water are being polluted by toxic and chemical wastes. Land has lost its organic nature by being alienated from the subsistence communities and being converted into express ways, runways, reservoirs, urban development projects and the like. Land is groaning with the uprooted communities. In the name of protecting forests and wild life, indigenous communities with ecological world views and practices are ousted from their traditional habitats. Mining, mega hydro-electric projects, and development projects are denuding the forests. Without a commitment to the spirit of bio-diversity, social forestry and our tree planting rituals will turn into green deserts.

### ***Poverty and Food Sovereignty***

Poverty is not an issue of scarcity which can be solved through increase in GDP; rather poverty is a systemic mechanism of accumulation that impoverishes marginalized communities by taking away their food sovereignty. Poverty is also an ecological crisis. When ecological destruction destroys the livelihoods of people, poverty becomes a perennial reality in their lives. Colonization of the commons is always a threat to the food security of subsistent communities who live in communion with these commons. Dominant ecological interventions such as social forestry and bio-fuel plantations further threaten the food security of the vulnerable communities.

### ***Mining***

Mining is the greatest ecological violence that is taking place in India today. It is violence against nature and violence against indigenous communities as well. Accumulation through dispossession and destruction is the logic behind the corporate interests in signing MOUs on the mountains in the adivasi hamlets. The ecological consequences of the mining activities are yet to be calculated. The dispossessed and displaced Adivasis and tribals constitute a new ethnicity called environmental refugees.

It is argued that mining is a major resource from natural mineral deposits to improve human life. But in the process, mining and its industries, have imminently threatened human life

(including alienation of tribal/indigenous peoples from their own land and livelihood through economic, administrative, military, and political policies made by governments from time to time), and the environment through biological, social and chemical impacts as also adversely impacting the physical land structure, land and forest vegetation, water systems, air; creating noise pollution and vibration problems and should this continue unabated with major players, viz. national and transnational conglomerates exploiting such resources with political and government full support inevitably, it will result in the tragic displacement of millions of indigenous people and the destruction of the eco-system. Given the commitment of the government to protect the interests of the mining corporations, social unrest and violence is going to continue in the region.

The above mentioned narratives categorically identify the prevailing neo-liberal development model as the root cause for our ecological crisis, and call for a total rejection of all manifestations of such development projects in our country. The dominant trajectory of development has always been a tragic reality in the lives of the women, dalits and adivasis in our country, who have been sacrificed at the altar of development for the “growth” and “progress” of “our” nation. This is a Kairos moment for the Church in India: to show the courage to opt for a new prognosis of the environmental crisis informed by our radical and organic involvement in the struggles of the subaltern movements, and to develop alternative eco-justice ministries to challenge environmental injustice.

### **Faith Reflections on Environmental Injustice**

The groaning of creation that we continue to hear from the wounded earth and the tortured humanity is not a helpless cry of the victims waiting for the ecological messiahs to intervene and redeem them. Rather the groaning of creation is a public protest that exposes the sinfulness and injustices prevalent in our social and ecological relations. As we read in the prophetic books, there is a correlation between the distress of the earth and social injustice. “The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, and broken the everlasting covenant” (Isaiah 24: 5). So groaning is a public display of the inherent sinfulness of the prevailing order and the resilience of the victims to transform it.

The groaning of creation is also a public witness. Confronted with the experience of utter God forsakenness the community of creation re-imagines God as a co-sufferer who laments with them while keeping their hope alive. Hagar, the abused and dispossessed single mother represents all who undergo different manifestations of desert experiences in our times. When water becomes a commodity with a price tag, Hagar's are destined to die in the wilderness without access to drinking water. But in that desert, Hagar re-imagined God as a well of water. On Mount Horeb, God appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of a bush. The bush was blazing but it was not consumed. This is an epiphany experience for the enslaved to see God as an organic presence in the midst of their sufferings and struggles keeping their hopes alive. Groaning of creation is a new discernment of God.

Groaning of creation is not a helpless cry that precedes death; rather it is a cry that announces the arrival of new life. It is the labor pain for alternatives. Groaning of creation exposes the ecological crisis as environmental injustice. It re-discovers God as a comrade in their everyday living experiences, and envisions them to believe in alternatives.

Christian mission in the context of the ecological crises is to strive for the healing of the earth. Healing is needed in our social and ecological relations. This is not a task that the Church has to strive for alone. We see the blossoming of the reign of God in our midst where neighborhood communities and social movements engage in radical social interventions to transform our social relations and ecological attitudes. The Church has to find its mission in being part of these movements in striving to heal the earth.



### **Churches' Engagement in Eco-justice Ministries**

1. The Church has to mainstream eco-justice ministries into its life and witness
2. Churches' teaching ministry should incorporate ecological concerns right from the Sunday School curriculum
3. The greening of the altar and the pulpit
4. New hymns, liturgies, creeds, prayers of confession
5. A deeper awareness about our ecological sins
6. The need for ecological audit: Examining our energy use
7. Boycotting corporations and financial institutions that support corporations and projects that destroy the earth
8. Challenging the congregation to consider ethical investments in firms that do not destroy life and livelihood.
9. An invitation to reduce consumption, and to opt non-conventional energy sources
10. Policy on travel
11. Promote rural producers and buy local products

### **Core Group:**

***Rev. Dr. PBM Basaiawmoit,***

Vice-President NCCI and Chairperson of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Presbyterian Churches in India

***Rev. Dr. M. J. Joseph,***

Convener, Ecological Commission of the Marthoma Syrian Church

***Rev. Dr. Ivy Singh,***

Ordained Minister of the Church of South India and Professor and Head of the Theology and Ethics Department at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary,

***Rev. Dr. Rajula Annie Watson,***

Ordained Minister of the Church of South India and Professor Christian Education at the Karnataka Theological College,

***Dr. George Zachariah,***

Professor and Head (in-charge) of Theology and Ethics Department at the Gurukul Theological College and Research Institute,

***Rev. Asir Ebenezer,***

Officiating General Secretary NCCI and

***Rev. R. Christopher Rajkumar,***

*(Convener and Secretary)*

Executive Secretary, Commission on Justice Peace and Creation NCCI.

## APPENDIX - 1

### Shillong Declaration on Development and Tourism

Addressed to the church and wider community

#### ***When the mountain disappears, what will be our identity?***

*The Shillong declaration is issued by the participants of the joint consultation on "The North East Indian Churches' response to development and tourism" organized by the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism, (ECOT), National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), Presbyterian Church of India (PCI), and the Martin Lutheran Christian University (MLCU) on 29-31 March, 2011 at the PCI Centre, Shillong, Meghalaya, India.*

Tourism is one of the four largest industries in the world, alongside oil and fuels, arms and armaments, and pharmaceuticals. It is growing at a fast rate, and according to estimates, its outlays amount to some ten percent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In India, tourism is considered to be the largest service industry. It is estimated that, annually, more than five million tourists arrive in the country. The number of domestic tourist arrivals is estimated to be in the region of some 600 million.

North East India with its rich flora and fauna, exotic cultural and ethnic mosaic, and the fresh and unexplored ecosystems holds immense attraction for the tourists whose numbers will increase.

The income generated from tourism is perceived as a panacea for the problems of the poor countries in the world. This perception is based on an assumed understanding that the profits from tourism industry will trickle down and benefit the poor communities.

But experience points to tourism being a major factor in the impoverishment of communities, as are war, ethnic conflict, corruption, inequitable distribution of wealth and resources, trade injustice, lack of infrastructure, lack of educational opportunities and so on.

The phenomenal growth in tourism always comes with huge social, economic and environmental costs.

The tourism industry is known to offer what has become known as "Sun, sand and sex tourism". It thrives by marketing nature-- the sun, sea, mountains, rivers, landscapes -- in a way that is an affront to God's creation.

Among the many dimensions of modern mass tourism that disadvantage the poor the world over are:

- The diversion of essential people's resources such as land, water, electricity and other infrastructure to entertain tourists and support hotels, resorts, golf courses, amusement parks and so on;
- The social costs through the abuse of women and children, and their trafficking;

- The costs entailed in the commercialization, commodification, and denigration of indigenous and local culture, and the resultant threat to cultural identity;
- The loss of revenue to host countries and communities as a result of the financial advantages gained by foreign and domestic business interests through tax concessions and holidays, subsidized land and other costs, import advantages, reduced wages and working conditions;
- The social and economic impact of displacement of people and communities caused by tourism development;
- Ecological imbalance and loss incurred in developing countries in the course of sustaining inappropriate tourism enterprises;
- The climate change implications through air travel;
- The cost to host communities through health hazards, arising from tourist activity involving HIV/AIDS, drugs and narcotics, among others;
- The human rights violations that occur in the name of tourism;
- The media do not seem to take much notice of the negative impact of mass tourism promoted by the government and the market, whose sole objective is making profit.

### **Questioning the development model**

We, the participants of the Shillong consultation, demand that the development model considered and implemented in North East India, promising peace and prosperity for all, should be revisited by the churches, relevant communities, civil society organizations and the relevant governments.

There is a dominant view that tourism can 'boost' development in the society. In a world driven by neo-liberal economic philosophy, tourism is seen as a major player for economic growth. This is not the kind of tourism that we envisage for a region like the North East India. What we want to promote is a kind of tourism that is fair, sustainable, and community-based.

We believe that the development of which tourism is seen as an integral part that is being imposed on the people of this region will undermine the traditional productive and natural systems, and increase the gulf between the rich and the poor. It is often associated with much displacement and uprooting of people and terrain, prompting a participant in the light of his experience to exclaim: *"When the mountain disappears, what will be our identity?"*

As responsible people grounded in the call of the gospel and its values, we reject the kind of development that is being touted as good for the people of this region.

Many churches in the region seem to follow the various forms of prosperity theologies which promote the belief that money is the indicator of prosperity, and God is blessing them with such prosperity.

We call the churches in the region, which has a Christian population of some 4 million, to address in response of tourism their theology of development and the Christian basis for it. Tourism growth in North East India is in its early stages, and hence there is a God-given opportunity to look ahead and consider the kind of tourism that will come to the region if unchecked.

We express our concern over the possible exploitation and commodification of indigenous people and their culture arising out of the introduction of the so called development and mass tourism enterprises.

We urge the churches to critique responsibly the development and tourism policies and programs of the government and the market in the region, and to initiate interfaith responses to the relevant issues.

We also urge the churches to make their members realize that critiquing and campaigning on issues like development and tourism is part of their Christian duty and mission and not to be treated simply as worldly matters.

We recognize that tourism leads to environmental problems especially in places where masses of people descend and use and exploit the fragile ecosystems.

We express our concern over the potential of tourism to destroy the traditional and cultural values of local communities, and the exploitation of the local people, including women and children.

We acknowledge that responsible and community based tourism will help ensure that the local environment, culture, values, ethos and heritage are not adversely affected, and the local communities, invariably poor, are economically benefitted.

We call upon the churches in the region and outside, human rights organizations, and the civil society movements to work for a tourism model which is based on ethics, human rights, community and sustainability.

We urge the print and electronic media to disseminate tourism-related stories which are alternative viewpoints to mainstream tourism practices, because media have a social responsibility to make people aware of the livelihood of travel destinations and the local populations.

#### **Action plans**

1. The National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) to organize a similar consultation for personnel working in the media
2. The Presbyterian Church in India (PCI) to disseminate the outcome of the consultation among its eight synods in the region, and help them organize at least two consultations in each synod within a year.

3. The PCI to take the lead in motivating the church and wider community to debate the issues arising with the assistance of relevant denominational and ecumenical bodies including the NEI Council of Churches.

4. The PCI women's fellowship to conscientize its members and empower them to become sensitive to the issues related to development and tourism.

5. The PCI Youth Fellowship to pick up the concerns emerging out of the consultation, and include them in their International Year of the Youth activities.

6. To develop a contextual "theology of development," and urge the Senate of Serampore College to create a curriculum on just tourism.

7. To use terms like "Solidarity visits," "living epistles," or "learning pilgrimages" in the church and ecumenical deliberations, so that it will give a different perspective and meaning to tourism.

The NCCI to disseminate the outcome of the consultation among the member churches, councils, related bodies, organizations and media.

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**APPENDIX - 2**  
**(Presented and accepted at the 13th General Assembly of the CCA in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)**

**"We Can Make a Difference"**  
**Climate Justice Policy Guidelines for CCA**

"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it" (Ps. 24:1), but the cedars of Lebanon, which were a part of the earth the psalmist knew are gone. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the sky proclaim the work of his hands" (Ps. 19:1), but today many parts of the world what the sky proclaims dimmed and muted by a yellow-brown haze, and scars on the earth below testify to its own erosion. And, "God saw all that he made, and it was very good" (Gen. 1:31), but today many of God's good creatures are threatened, endangered and disappearing from the earth forever (Van Dyke, at al, 1996).

The 13th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) is holding the Assembly under the theme "*Called to Prophesy, Reconcile and Heal*". One specific priority that needs to be recognized is climate justice. In a world of economic competition and greed, one part of the world does not want to hear about climate justice. Another part is struggling for their very existence against the changing climate. This struggle has been brought on by the way of life in the so called 'first world'. The root causes of the current climate crisis, while controversial in the past, are no secret today. It is clear that a century of heavy industrialization, rapid development, and fossil fuel consumption in the western world has radically altered the Earth's atmosphere and life as we know it.



This environmentally-destructive, market-oriented lifestyle has caught up with the planet's health, and now the reality of climate change poses a grave threat to not only the future of the planet but to the livelihood of vulnerable people today.

### **Unequal Burden**

The grave injustice is that those least responsible are paying the highest price today. Conference reports and many other studies in the area of climate change have linked consumption of the richest in the world and the conditions within struggling countries. The 1992 Chiang Mai Conference on Ecology and Development stated: *"we are confronted with global ecological issues such as deforestation, greenhouse effects, acid rain, chlorofluorocarbons, and desertification caused by unjust global economic order."* In November 1994, the Pacific Conference of Churches met in Majuro, the capital of Marshall Islands to discuss the challenge to *'Justice and to Creation'*. The conference attempted to encapsulate the economic and environmental injustices facing the Pacific Islands. Indeed, the Pacific is one region particularly plagued by climate injustices. For example, sea-level rise as a result of global warming and glacier melting poses an existential threat to numerous small island nations. The Maldives nation, elevated at an average 2.1 meters above sea level, held an underwater cabinet meeting in 2009 to illustrate that "they face being wiped out if oceans rise." Tuvalu faces a similar problem, as "waves have washed over the island's main roads; coconut trees stand partly submerged; and small patches of cropland have been rendered

unusable because of encroaching saltwater." The reality of injustice is that people are drowning in the decades of irresponsible industrial activity originating halfway around the world.

This vulnerability to ocean levels also makes the impact of natural disasters greater in Asia. Simultaneously, climate is becoming more extreme in this highly disaster-prone region, and the damages caused by flooding, drought, tsunamis and tropical storms have increased statistically. The economic system puts developing countries at further burden, because they are less able to adapt to the changing biosphere. Thus, global economic policies further threaten the existence of the small islands and the survival of the poor.

### **Negligence of the Wealthy**

Unfortunately, the countries that cause climate change fail to acknowledge and bear the responsibility for their misdeeds. To the affluent nations so distanced from the environment, climate change is still an abstract concept that concerns posterity, rather than a pressing issue affecting the lives of many. So, while many nations have accepted the link between climate change and their lifestyle, they have *no real intentions* to change their way of life. Nevertheless, dawn of so called "*green revolutions*" and numerous international summits and conferences on climate change (Rio de Janeiro 1992, Kyoto 1997, Copenhagen 2009 and so on.), the developed nations or guilty parties will have the world believe they are taking due responsibility. The false

solutions conjured at these summits allow those in power to maintain their high-tech carbon civilization, while creating the facade of 'mitigation' and 'climate action'. In reality, the treaties unfairly shift the heavy burdens of cleaning up the earth and adopting green technology to the West's economic rivals, the developing nations such as China and India. Meanwhile, the long-term price of fossil fuel consumption is paid for by the least wealthy!

### **Why Climate Justice?**

In this context what becomes imperative in addressing climate change is the issue of climate justice. Seeking climate justice is a twofold endeavor, first to call on the developed countries to accept responsibility and take action, and second, to fully address the immediate impacts of climate change in Asia and the southern hemisphere. The Telegraph UK in its web edition on 30 April 2008 quoting Prof Mohan Munasinghe reported: *“It is up to the richest fifth of the world - that consumes 60 times more than the poorest fifth - to try to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing its reliance on fossil fuels. It is also up to these countries to help those who will be worst affected through international development.”* This requires the developed world to confess their sin of excessive consumption that contributes to climate change. It requires people in every region to rethink their lifestyles, assess their carbon footprint and make necessary changes. In order to achieve this “we must show the link between climate change and problems we are suffering.”

Climate justice will create a balance between production and consumption for the natural world and its life to exist. The concept of Jubilee in the Hebrew Scriptures is an ancient method practiced to maintain this balance (Leviticus 25:8ff). Accordingly, all have to share the available resources in a resource-scarce world. Therefore at the heart of climate justice is immediate cooperation of all segments of humanity. We can and must, make a difference. "While the scale of the problem we face may seem overwhelming, we as individuals have a duty to try to address the issue of climate change. However small it is, we can provide a positive contribution which will make a difference" [Prof. Munasinghe].

### **Climate Justice in Asian Perspective**

Asia is the world's largest and most populous continent is home to about 60% of the world's population today. It is located primarily in the eastern and northern hemispheres and covers 8.6% of the Earth's total surface area or 29.9% of its land area. The Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC published in 2007 emphasized that the projected impacts would be serious in several sectors in Asia, including agriculture, water, health, and coastal and marine, space and ecosystems.

After Copenhagen meeting in 2009, negotiations on mitigating greenhouse gases (GHG), essentially carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), is fast turning into a development issue how much growth each nation can pursue given the constraints on the limiting capacity of the atmospheric carbon space. In light of Climate Justice Realities, it is clear that the vision for climate justice response must extend beyond the CoP (Conference of the Parties)

negotiations; Developing nations and Asia in particular know the struggle doesn't end at CoP.

While the world responds to this new climate reality, the developing and poorer nations must demand a JUST response to climate change. It should not be left to developing countries to clean up the mess created by wealthy nations in the last hundred years. A concerted effort by governments, religious institutions and ecumenical groups and grassroots movements is needed.

In current development, there are already lots of efforts to cope with disaster risks and climate change agenda. However, there is still a gap between policy and actions to incorporate Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia and Pacific Region. The urgency of the threat of climate related disasters and its impact requires our generation to take immediate action and go beyond COP meetings and draw simple declarations and statements. While new alternative models are called for it is important to have effective mechanisms of action frameworks of the Climate Justice Adaptation incorporated by Churches in Asia.

**Recommendations for Climate Justice Policy Guidelines**

1. CCA shall keep its prophetic mission to critically challenge the Neoliberal Economic system in all kinds of its presence within Asian countries and wider International context that definitely has caused injustices in economy, ecology, and holistic wellbeing in joining hands with Civil Societies and relevant movements, and develop Alternative Economic Models. CCA must address the impact of the emerging economies in Asia.

1. CCA shall call upon all its members and Christian communities to commit in raising awareness amongst people about 'Climate Justice' by caring for God's Creation.
2. CCA should encourage all the theological Institutions to incorporate Eco-theology as a compulsory subject in its curricula, and endeavour to develop appropriate resource materials.
3. CCA should promote models of Just-tourism that are Eco-friendly and sustainable, while challenging the current models of Tourism.
4. CCA shall extend intensive action agendas for climate justice including sustainable education and capacity building for Churches related to Climate Justice, disaster risks reductions, and adaptation to climate change. CCA shall also facilitate the Member Churches' teaching ministry and our ecological literacy as a Prophetic Mission.
5. CCA should Mainstream and integrate 'Climate Justice' with all its programmes and activates of the departments and commissions.
6. CCA should come out with policy on 'Air travel and use of Energy efficient vehicles' (Ref: CCA Programme Review)
7. CCA should have policy on 'Green Administration, use of recycled products, ecofriendly stationeries and lighting and energy.

### **Climate Justice Forum Participants**

1. Haskarlianus Pasang, PhD (Indonesia)
2. Devashrie de Silva (Sri Lanka)
3. Necta Montes Rocas (Philippines)
4. Marto Arturo G (Philippines)
5. James Vijaykumar (USA/India)
6. E.K. Yasaratna (Sri Lanka)
7. Beatris Pangalo (Indonesia)
8. Joyanta Adhikari (Bangladesh)
9. Jeff Wild (Australia)
10. Heiner Knauss EED
11. Michel Press Germany
12. Gideon Bustamante - Philippians

### **Supported By CCA / JID Climate Justice Core Group:**

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4. Mr. Timotius Apriyanto Indonesian
5. Mr. Hishashi Yukimoto Japan NCCP
6. Rev. Freddy De Alwis (Ex. Sec. CCA / JID)

### **Appendix - 3 AGAPE Consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Asia and the Pacific**

Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2-6 November 2009  
**WCC-CCA-PCC**  
**The Chiang Mai Declaration**

#### **Preamble**

1. We, people of faith and church leaders from Asia and the Oceania, with the accompaniment of our sisters and brothers from other continents, have gathered in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 02 to 06 November 2009 to reflect deeply on the fundamental links between impoverishment, wealth creation and accumulation, and ecological crisis according to our Christian faith, in dialogue with other faiths, and from the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, women and young persons. We met at the time of the Buddhist *Loy Khratong* Festival when people offer flowers and light candles and incense to give thanks to the River Goddess. The festival became for us a symbol of our coming together in the common search for the River of Life.

#### **A world and region in peril**

2. Our planet, and particularly the nations and islands in Asia and the Oceania, are confronted by unparalleled and multiple catastrophes.

3. Asian nations, which account for more than half of the global population, have often been held up as a successful application of the neoliberal economic model, described as “economic tigers and dragons” and a “global factory”. But our region's wealth is being siphoned off in

the form of corporate profits squeezed from cheap, predominantly female, labour; external debt payments to international financial institutions made at the expense of massive cuts in social expenditures; the privatization and commodification of land; and exports of people, lumber and other “raw materials” from poor to wealthier nations. We listened with heavy hearts to stories of: Burmese migrant workers fleeing political and economic oppression only to encounter other forms of oppression in Thailand; tens of thousands of farmer suicides in India; Asian students falling into debt because of spiralling tuition fees; women in the Mekong region trafficked into prostitution...

4. Because Asia's system of wealth creation is centred on the global economy, our region has been heavily battered by the current global financial and economic crisis caused by heightened “financialization” (or the de-linking of finance from the real economy). Factory workers in export processing zones have been retrenched in large numbers. The monies sent home by our migrant workers are dwindling. Many of our governments are too indebted and cash-strapped to respond with even the barest of social protection.

5. In the pursuit of super-profits, the neoliberal system of wealth creation and accumulation in Asia has not only produced poverty, it has generated tremendous social and ecological debts debts owed to Mother Earth; to the impoverished, Indigenous Peoples and women who bear a disproportionate burden of adjustment to drastic changes in the climate and the rest of ecology; and to young people and forthcoming generations whose very futures are endangered by dominant production and

consumption patterns that fail to respect the regenerative limits of our planet. We listened with heavy hearts to stories of: forced ecological migrants as sea waters rise and threaten to inundate Oceania islands and archipelagic nations like Bangladesh; Indigenous Peoples dispossessed of their ancestral lands by mining corporations and mega-dam projects, resulting in the ethnocide of indigenous communities and cultures; villages facing famine and water shortages across the region...

6. In Asia and Oceania as in elsewhere, violence has often been used by the economically and politically-powerful in securing the planet's “natural resources”. Imperialist terror and greed desecrate both Mother Earth and women's bodies. We listened with heavy hearts to stories of: church people gunned down in the Philippines for defending ecology and farmers' and workers' rights; communities dying from toxic pollutants in military bases; intensified violence against women in their own homes in times of economic hardship and in militarized zones...

### **Asia-Oceania spiritualities in response to impoverishment, greed and ecological destruction**

7. We believe that the interlinked economic and ecological crises are manifestations of a larger ethical, moral and spiritual crisis. For it is in putting absolute faith in “free markets”, in worshipping wealth and material goods, and in following a gospel of consumerism and mindless expansion that human beings have exploited their own sisters and brothers and have ravaged their only home.

8. Therefore, overcoming the crises requires nothing less than a radical spiritual renewal. We reaffirm, according to our Christian tradition, that such a transformation must be founded on the Biblical imperatives of God's preferential option for the marginalized (justice) and the sacredness of all Creation (sustainability).

9. At the same time, we draw important learnings from the deep wells of Asian traditional wisdom. "When you unite wealth, you divide the people. When you divide wealth, you unite the people."

10. From the peoples of Oceania, we learned about the peoples' intrinsic connection with lands and oceans and all life therein in affirmation of God's presence in all Creation. It is in this understanding that the peoples of Oceania are striving to regain a spirituality of the ecology in which we "live and move and have our being".

11. From the spirituality of Asian and Oceanic Indigenous Peoples, we learned to expand the greatest Biblical teaching to "love our neighbours" to "Mother Water", "Brother Kangaroo", and "Cousin Tree".

12. From eco-feminism, we learned about the falsehood of dichotomies between mind and body and between humans and nature that translate into inequitable relationships.

13. From the vibrant indigenous, women and youth movements in Asia and Oceania, we learned about the spirituality that is found in resistance and political engagement. We derived hope from stories of: indigenous women transferring traditional knowledge

and communitarian values and contributing to sustainable economies; and young people playing a leading role in preventing land grab by Arcelor-Mittal, a multinational steel company in the state of Jharkhand in India.

14. From other ancient faiths and religions birthed in Asia, we learned about Buddhism's "middle way"; Hinduism's *ahimsa* (nonviolence) towards ecology and all human beings; and Islam's injunction to fight oppression in all its forms.

15. Genuine faith and spirituality entail action. We assert that the multiple crises we confront today urgently demand radical and collective responses, not only from Asia and Oceania, but also from the worldwide faith community. United in God's love, *we can and must* begin to construct flourishing and harmonious economies where:

- all participate and have a voice in the decisions that impact on their lives;
- people's basic needs are provided for through just livelihoods;
- social reproduction and the care work done predominantly by women are supported and valued; and
- air, water, land and energy sources that are necessary to sustain life are protected and preserved.
- In short, we can and must shape Economies of Life and Economies for Life.

### **Our commitments and calls**

16. In view of the foregoing, we, the participants of the AGAPE Consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Asia and the Pacific, commit to the following:

1. Build and strengthen a faith-based network or networks advancing social, economic, and ecological justice in partnership with civil society organizations and social movements in the region;

2. Share widely, communicate creatively (e.g. through websites and videos), discuss deeply, and teach consistently the Chiang Mai Declaration together with the Asia-Pacific Indigenous Peoples', Women's and Youth Statements on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology to our constituencies, congregations, seminary students, and partners; and

3. Be living alternatives that promote sustainable communities beginning with practising eco-just consumption.

17. We further call on our churches in Asia and Oceania, and global and regional ecumenical organizations to:

1. Emphasize research and advocacy efforts on redistributive economic policies, especially land reform, and alternative consumption and production systems in the Asia and the Oceania;

2. Support Oceania churches' initiatives and advocacy efforts on resettlement plans, adaptation and reparations to small island states in Oceania and other Asian countries rendered victims by ecological and climate change to address the ecological and climate debt owed to them;

3. Accompany member churches of the WCC and PCC in Oceania in:

- Developing local, national, sub-regional, regional and international plans to ensure respect for and protection of the rights of forced climate migrants;
- Promoting research on prospective resettlement plans and on instruments such as ecological audits to ascertain the costs of resettlement; and
- Developing the framework for a new Convention or Protocol on Resettlement to cater for forced ecological migrants; and
- Commissioning studies on the links between poverty, wealth and ecology in the Oceania region with a view to presenting the findings in the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Pacific Conference of Churches in 2012

4. Allocate more resources to WCC's programmes on ecological debt, climate change, and water in order to address the incredibly pressing challenges in these areas;

5. Empower women, Indigenous Peoples and youth who bring a wealth of wisdom and energy to participate fully in policy and decision-making in church processes, especially in the urgent work on economic and ecological justice;

6. Conduct ecological debt and gender audits to account for the social and ecological costs of church initiatives and activities;

7. Strengthen and provide a platform for Indigenous Peoples with adequate financing and resourcing of the existing Indigenous Peoples' desk at the WCC and immediately convene a working group to develop the terms of reference and scope for an Indigenous Peoples' Christian Action Forum;

8. Participate in alternative lifestyle cultures that reject consumerist corporate cultures through regenerating common public spaces of dissent and creation, and engaging in public awareness and education especially among young people; and

9. Organize a dialogue on poverty, wealth and ecology with multi-faith communities to bring meaningful solidarity.

Source:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology.htm>

#### Appendix - 4

### World Environmental Day (WED) June 05<sup>th</sup> 2010

Theme: Many Species, One Planet and One Future

**World Environment Day (WED)** which is observed on 5<sup>th</sup> of June every year, is a day that stimulates awareness of the environment, societal attention and public commitment. To the faith-oriented it also presents an opportunity to search for faith responses. The theme for this year is, *Many Species: One Planet, One Future*.

It is estimated that 5 million to 100 million species inhabit this wonderful planet. Scientists have managed to identify only about 2 million species so far. In God's creation human race is one in several million species that live in this planet. We do not have adequate information about the other species with which we share this earth, many of whom disappear even before they are discovered. A total of 17,291 species are known to be threatened with extinction from little-known plants and insects to charismatic birds and mammals.

Such extinctions are on account of our present approach to development, we have caused the clearing of much of the original forest, drained half of the world's wetlands, depleted three quarters of all fish stocks, and emitted enough heat-trapping gases to keep our planet warming for centuries to come. We have put our foot on the accelerator, making species extinctions occur at up to 1000 times the natural rate.



The result of all this is we risk the loss of the very foundation of our own survival. The variety of life on our planet known as 'biodiversity' gives us our food, clothes, fuel, medicine and much, much more. The beetle in your backyard or grass growing by the roadside has a fundamental connection to us even though we are not always aware of it. When even one species is taken out of the intricate web of life, the results can be catastrophic.

For this reason, the United Nations has declared 2010 the *International Year of Biodiversity*. It is an opportunity to stress the importance of biodiversity for human well-being, reflect on our achievements to safeguard it and encourage a redoubling of our efforts to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss.

**Commemoration, Celebration, Challenge:**

Commemoration of WED has two aspects one is 'celebration' and other is a 'challenge'. We as a Christian faith based communities have to 'thank God' for the multi species and bio-diversified environment as gift to the cosmic communities.

But the same time due to the personal and individualistic greedy actions of the powerful, parts of important landscape and species are disappearing everyday from this cosmic community. This is challenge to the faith based communities who affirm God as the creator and sustainer of this cosmos. While thanking God we have to take up the Challenge too.

**Missiological Agenda:**

Our commitment to the care of the Cosmic should be our mission agenda, because the 'Earth is Gods, and who dwell in it'. (Psl 24:1). It is therefore our missiological responsibility to care and save God's earth. Our commitment and decision may be small, but as UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon says, "*Although individual decisions may seem small in the face of global threats and trends, when billions of people join forces in common purpose, we can make a tremendous difference.*"

We will create an impact and a positive action for change if through the WED celebrations, hundreds of thousands of people from every local congregation and Churches from all over India will be mobilized for environmental-care actions and activities locally and nationally.

**Getting Started:**

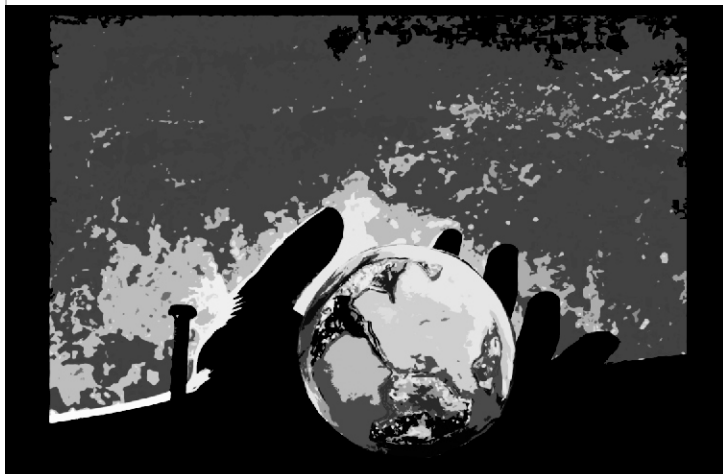
WED activities could involve all sectors of Church life such as Sunday School, Men and Women's Fellowship, Youth Fellowship, Schools, Social Concern Wings, Media, Prayer Fellowships and the Congregation as whole.

The National Council of Churches in India invites Churches, Ecumenical Councils, Organizations, and Agencies in India and all their constituents including Theological Colleges to celebrate and respond to the Environmental Concerns.

**Some Proposed activities:**

Special Prayers, Sermons from the Pulpit by observing 'Green Sunday', Tree Planting on the Church / Institution Campus, Seminars, Dialogues and Discussions, Joining with the secular groups who are involving in your locality, Elocution, Essay and Art Competition at inter-Sunday Schools / Schools / College levels, Week of Prayer for Creation.

**R. Christopher Rajkumar**  
Executive Secretary,  
Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation



**Appendix - 5**

**09:10:11 Creation Day (09th October 2011)**

**Remember the Creator and Creation Campaign 2011**

The Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation of the National Council of Churches in India, initiated a campaign 'Remember the Creator and Creation' last year, on the Global Ecumenical Movement's call to observe 'Creation Time' from 1st September to 4th October. 1st September is the first day of the Orthodox Church Traditions' calendar and 04th October is the feast of the Church Father Saint Francis of Assisi, known to world as the author of the Canticle of the Creatures. The beginning and the end date of Time for Creation are linked with the concern for creation in the Eastern and the Western traditions of Christian faith traditions.

God of the Bible is being introduced as Creator. Christian Faith starts with belief in creation by God. Therefore our faith journey is to be celebrated in honour of Creator and Creation. We as faith communities need to rejoice and to celebrate our faith along with the other Ecclesial traditions which are called to observe the 'Time for Creation' as an Ecumenical Expression and Solidarity.

The NCCI is suggesting to all its Member Churches, Organizations and individuals to observe 'Creation Day'. Since, this year, the Sunday after 04th October would fall on the 09th October 2011, i.e., the date, month and year would read as 09:10:11, we suggest that you extend your Creation time observation by a few days and observe Creation Day on the 09th October 2011 with Special Prayers, Homilies, Intercessions, Vigils and Activities which affirm the Creator and Creation.

The United Nations Organization has announced this year, 2011 as the International Year of Forests. The focus of the **International Year of Forests** is on the slogan “Forests for People” thereby emphasizing the central role of people in the conservation, sustainable management and development of our world's forests. The iconographic elements in the event depict some of the multiple values of forests and the need for a 360° degree perspective: forests provide shelter to people and habitat to biodiversity; are a source of food, medicine and clean water; and play a vital role in maintaining a stable global climate and environment. All of these elements taken together reinforce the message that forests are vital to the survival and well being of people everywhere, all 7 billion of us. But as we all are aware, the Indian forests and the forest dwellers including species are under threat because of contemporary developmental policies of our Governments. So, this year may all our creation day events be focused on Forests and let us especially pray for the protection of God Created Forests, Forest Dwellers and Species.

We the NCCI request and encourage all our member Churches and constituent members in organizing prayers on the theme. Ecclesial leaders say:

*"The current ecological crisis is primarily spiritual and ethical with serious political, economic and justice implications."*

*"As human beings we have failed to appreciate the intrinsic worth of ourselves, other humans, other species and future generations."*

Therefore, it is the very right occasion for us as a faith based community to make our members become ecologically conscious and responsible.

The Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation of the National Council of Churches in India invites all the Member Churches, All India Ecumenical and related Organizations, Regional Council and Autonomous Bodies to observe 09:10:11 (09th October 2011) as a Day of Creation with Prayers and Eco-friendly activities in your premises and institutions.

Let us remember the Creator and Creation.

**Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad**  
General Secretary

**Rev. R. Christopher Rajkumar**  
Executive Secretary

Worship on Forest

<http://www.letallcreationpraise.org/united-states-ecumenical/spirit-series-a>

WCC Worship Recourses:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/events-sections/countdown-to-climate-justice/time-for-creation.html>



Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation

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