

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRAMME GROUP MEETING
9-10 MARCH 2019**

Overview: The Strategic Planning Programme Group (SPPG) met and received accountability reports from the Reference Groups. These were fully discussed and advice and counsel were given where needed. Key questions were processed and some guiding conclusions were offered as noted below. The accountability reports are coherent and on track showing the WCRC to be moving ahead with the initiatives articulated in the Strategic Plan. Some events/actions are already complete, others are in process, and still others in planning stages. A sequencing of programs for the next few years is being worked out collaboratively. Responsibilities have been coordinated and roles clarified.

The Strategic Plan and the process that lead to it were reviewed along with the Programme Plan for 2017-24 (an operational document based upon the Strategic Plan). We reinforced the interconnectedness of all the work we do in our five interlocking dimensions: communion, justice, theology, mission and ecumenical engagement. Four action verbs articulated in the Strategic Plan drive the work: discerning, witnessing, confessing and reforming. We reaffirmed this basic orientation.

General Questions and Responses

Question: What to do when new unforeseen opportunities or funding sources arise?

Response: Have flexibility to respond in accord with the mandates of the Strategic Plan. SPPG can help in discernment as needed.

Question: Is it advantageous to have SPPG meetings face-to-face for better coordination/collaboration in our communal and participatory process?

Response: Yes, insofar as funding allows for this.

Comment: SPPG recognized the changing ecumenical landscape and the advantage of the new structure we are adopting which is more flexible and nimble and participatory. Balance of structure and flexibility is what we seek.

Accountability Reports from the Reference Groups (RGs) and Responses of SPPG

1) Justice and Witness. (Philip Vinod Peacock reporting)

This report presents a programmatic overview of the work of the office of justice and witness, based on the Strategic Plan. SPPG discerned together how the Accountability Reports of the RG's should be structured.

In terms of format, SPPG recommends that accountability reports on particular programs lead with "IMPACT" rather than activity. What is intended in the way of impact? Follow with details on activities and their evaluation.

Since this is an accountability report, SPPG recommends that there be some evaluation of the impact of each activity. In each case, we state what we hoped to accomplish, say what we did, and make an evaluative summary.

SPPG agreed that introductions to the accountability reports will be repurposed as introductions to the work in these three areas. These may also be incorporated in a new "user friendly" version of the Strategic Plan.

2) Communion and Theology (Hanns Lessing reporting)

Communion:

Each program was presented and discussed and affirmed. Strategic decisions were made on which activities would move forward and which needed additional planning to prepare for implementation.

Theology:

Processes are on the way to revitalize *Reformed World* and to plan for the next GIT (2020 in the Philippines). These processes were presented and affirmed.

SPPG may need to make qualitative feedback on the Reformed Partnership Fund and what roll the Partnership Fund should play in the Communion.

3) *Mission and Ecumenical Engagement (Hanns Lessing reporting)*

Mission:

There was no concept paper approved at the 2017 General Council, so additional work will be needed. SPPG affirmed “Liberating Discipleship” as a promising theme.

With regard to the Ruth Project, specifically regarding the stated purpose (“to offer refuge”), there was general agreement to broaden that purpose to include advocacy, solidarity, hospitality, etc.

Ecumenical Engagement:

Ecumenical engagement of note: JDDJ communions will be meeting at Notre Dame University in March. Wittenberg Witness implementation will be taken up (once LWF appoints new ecumenical officer),

Reports on each of the ongoing dialogues were received, discussed, and affirmed. Sources of funding were clarified.

Implementation Plan Review and SPPG Response

Communion & Theology: Planned Programmes

Decisions: SPPG would like to see a general proposal regarding where we plan to hold our events/activities so that we can ensure balance among the regions. The SPPG can help evaluate the balance.

Program 3 (Disabilities): While this program is within the Communion & Theology RG, SPPG commends that it be facilitated by the Justice & Witness desk. Decision of the SPPG was that we need to get back to the RG and ask whether this is responsive to the actual, concrete, material claim that the people living with disabilities put to us originally.

Program 4.1 (Communicating the Communion): SPPG affirmed the initiative around “Empire: Living out the Accra Confession” that was begun in Manila last year and supports its continuation.

Suggestion for consideration: Shall we hold a “communion” Sunday and provide resources to member churches for worship and preaching and interpretation of Accra and our identity as “called to communion, committed to justice?” We could perhaps have some resource(s) along the lines of “WCRC: From Confession to Confessing.”

Suggestion for consideration: Should we develop a more visual mapping of our organization and its programs? We might see the interrelations better. SPPG agreed that the program pages need to be improved upon for clarity and visual effectiveness. A member of SPPG will assist.

Program 6 (Human Sexuality): SPPG supports a follow-up to the Chennai consultation, which will include a video project. General Council action 56 condemned all acts of violence against LGBTQ persons and committed to work for a safe world for all persons to flourish.

Program 7 (Race, Authoritarianism, and Nationalism--RAN): SPPG suggests that issues of race, the construction of whiteness, and white supremacy should receive more attention.

Staff Questions to SPPG

Question: Where should RAN settle for monitoring and guidance?

Response: Because it crosses RG's it should be lodged with the SPPG itself, but Philip will be the point person from staff on this.

Question: Program 27 (Migrants) also has overlapping issues. Where shall it be lodged?

Response: Lodge it with the Mission and Ecumenical Engagement RG, but Philip will be the point person on staff.

SPPG reaffirmed that Programs 29-31 do not fall under any Reference Groups as they are under the office of the General Secretary. If there are any programmatic issues they will be brought to the SPPG or the appropriate RG.

SPPG reaffirmed that the Organizational Objectives are not under the purview of the SPPG as they are not programmatic work. The Executive Staff and Executive Committee Officers would be the more likely group to which these would be brought.

Items on pages 15-16 of the Strategic Plan that are not yet translated into activities will receive attention though they connect with work that is ongoing in communicating the communion, empire, redeeming religion, etc. SPPG suggested that these lists may chart the field in which the new editorial board of *Reformed World* can pursue topics; similarly, these could be foci for the GIT.

Planning and themes for GIT were reviewed, discussed, and supported by the SPPG. The appointment of HaeRan Kim-Cragg as Academic Dean received affirmation.

Question: Whether and how WCRC might participate in the Emden Commemoration (450th Anniversary).

Response: We could participate, but would need to keep our role(s) within a realistic scope given other priorities. It cannot become the center of our activity for 2021.

Additional Recommendations from SPPG

The task for SPPG is to provide information that can be drawn into the General Secretary's report. It includes a description of what we have accomplished to date in implementation of Strategic Plan. This information will appear in the three RG Accountability Reports and the summary and guidance from the SPPG's meeting. The SPPG report is summative, referential, and offers guidance to the RGs.

SPPG supported continuing work on the RG Accountability Reports along with a more "user friendly" version of the Strategic Plan.