

**Report of the
17th World Council of YMCAs
and International Youth Forum**

“Striving for Global Citizenship for All”

YMCA Wu Kwa Shai Youth Village
Hong Kong SAR
17th – 24th July 2010



World Alliance of YMCAs

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1. PREFACE

The 17th World Council of YMCAs meeting organised by the World Alliance of YMCAs and hosted by the Council of YMCAs of Hong Kong gathered together 1,134 participants from over 80 countries.

The event took place at the Wu Kwai Sha YMCA Youth Village, from 17th – 24th July 2010 under the theme "Striving for Global Citizenship for All". The Opening Ceremony was held at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, where the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, the Honorable Donald Tsang, welcomed all delegates and officially opened the 17th World Council. Congratulatory messages were received from dignitaries and leaders from fraternal organizations, including the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, congratulating the YMCA for its efforts in strengthening local communities, and its engagement in programme and advocacy work for the Millennium Development Goals.

Our reflections on the theme led us to analyse the context in which global citizenship, with all the rights and responsibilities it entails, is to be practiced. We have pointed out the multiple global challenges that are inextricably linked- the economic, ecological and geopolitical, at the base of which is a deep spiritual crisis. Noting the “life-stealing, life-killing and life-destroying civilization” we are living in, we committed to work towards a “life-giving civilization”.

I am pleased to present this Report of the 17th World Council of YMCAs, which includes all the major presentations and deliberations, and wish to highlight the three key affirmations: 1) the need to continue with the Global Operating Plan for Movement Strengthening, with a key focus on Resource Mobilisation; 2) the need to continue exploring and developing a global branding process 3.) the need to further strengthen advocacy and programmes on youth issues, including positioning the global YMCA movement as a leading youth movement.

I wish to thank all the leaders, delegates, resource persons, colleagues and staff at the World Alliance, without whose hard work and caring support, this World Council would not have been such a meaningful, exciting and life-changing event. A special word of thanks to Martin Meißner for his outstanding leadership, and to the leaders and colleagues of the two YMCAs in Hong Kong, the Chinese YMCA and the YMCA of Hong Kong, including the Council of YMCAs of Hong Kong, for their cooperation and generous support in making this event such a historic one.

Bartholomew Shaha, PhD
Secretary General

2. INTRODUCTION

Theme: “Striving for Global Citizenship for All”.

As we begin the second decade of the 21st century, we are faced with multiple crises and critical issues emerging from the rapid and intensive process of globalisation.

A huge number of our world population live in dire need, particularly in remote villages, slums or shanty towns and daily they face: hunger and starvation, grinding poverty, unemployment or underemployment, pandemic diseases, malnutrition, and gross violation of human rights. Inequalities between nations and between peoples within a nation are widening. Some people are connected while most are in total isolation. And youth in particular are most affected due to their marginalisation and vulnerability.

Concern about the “intensifying process of globalisation” led the YMCA to adopt a resolution at its 16th World Council to promote global citizenship, emphasizing “global responsibility” as an integral aspect of our “common humanity”. Just as the YMCA was established as a response to the challenges faced by young people vis-à-vis the industrial revolution in the 19th century, so too is the YMCA called to “respond to the multiple crises facing humanity” in present times.

While global citizenship became part of the YMCA’s global agenda in 2006, National Movements had already been implementing programmes that promote global learning on issues like poverty, migration, multiculturalism, peace building and the environment long before the resolution existed.

In preparation for World Council, the World Alliance of YMCAs organised a workshop on Global Citizenship in Coventry, UK (October 2009) to facilitate the sharing of good practices on global citizenship programmes within and outside the YMCA movement. Workshop participants identified moral, ecological, economic and security imperatives in the practice of global citizenship, as well as possible objectives, outcomes, and principles for a “YMCA framework for global citizenship work” with young people. Participants noted that global citizenship programmes should: challenge traditional understandings of global realities and develop innovative ways of responding to and transforming our world; empower young people to have a voice and take action; facilitate the building of solidarity, through purposeful partnerships and based on mutual sharing between YMCAs on a global scale; and should result in an increased awareness of belonging to one world, and the formation of a new generation of young leaders.

The YMCA has a presence in over 12,000 local units around the world. Daily we deal with the impact of globalisation and seek innovative responses at a community level. At the same time, we are in a unique position to respond globally through advocacy and education. Thus the theme “Striving for Global Citizenship for All”, is about global solidarity on these local challenges, and a global agenda to empower especially our youth to be active citizens to make a difference in their communities, countries, continents and the world.

Logo

The Council of YMCAs of Hong Kong designed the logo for the 17th World Council of YMCAs. The colours, imagery and symbols used capture the World Council’s theme of “Striving for Global Citizenship for All”. The fluid lines and open space show an absence of boundaries among global citizens. This concept is also echoed in the well-known Chinese saying that forms part of the logo: “Four seas, one family” (四海一家). This also reminds us of

the World Alliance of YMCAs' motto "That they all may be one" (John 17:21) adopted in Paris in 1855. The Chinese character "人" (which means "people") appears twice in the logo, representing the connection between people everywhere. When inverted, this character looks like the letter Y – for the YMCA Movement.

Venue

The World Council venue and main accommodation site was the YMCA Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village - a self contained Youth Village with its own catering service, sports facilities, and meeting spaces, approximately 40 minutes from the centre of Hong Kong.

Host Movement

The Council of YMCAs of Hong Kong was established in 1961 to act as a co-ordinating committee for its two constituent YMCAs: the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong and the YMCA of Hong Kong.

It is responsible for fostering growth of the YMCA movement both in Hong Kong, the region, and the world – and is thus the body affiliated with the World Alliance and Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs. The Council's leadership is made up of directors from the two affiliated *YMCA Boards, youth representatives elected from their youth leader constituencies, and their two General Secretaries and appointed executive staff.*

3. YMCA INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FORUM

From 17-19 July, 400 young people from over 80 YMCA National Movements gathered at the Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village in Hong Kong for the YMCA International Youth Forum (IYF). The forum, which was also held under the theme: 'Striving for Global Citizenship for All' provided training for youth delegates for active participation at World Council, as well as opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences, skills building, and strategising for the future with a strong focus on how the YMCA can contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Highlights of the 3-day event included: an inter-generational dialogue with speakers spanning three generations discussing the challenges facing youth today and how to overcome them; a festival of good practices with workshops on MDG issues including gender, HIV/AIDS, and the environment; a public music concert, "A Tribute to Gaia", featuring internationally renowned artists; and inputs from guest speakers including Athena Peralta, World Council of Churches, and Mr. Liberato C. Bautista, of CONGO.

Youth Advocacy and the MDGs

Mr. Liberato C. Bautista, President of CoNGO (Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations), gave a thought-provoking and inspiring keynote address at the Youth Forum. Speaking about the MDGs he said:

"When agreed to by 189 heads of state at the 2000 Millennium Summit of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the MDGs were meant to be a commitment by these states to work together and build a safer, more prosperous and equitable world for all. This commitment, the UN member states said, was a reaffirmation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations—for human rights and social justice, for international peace and security,

for social progress and sustainable development—which they said were timeless and universal in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. But the lackluster commitment to financing for development, including the flow of official development aid, there is, and whatever commitments governments have already said but not matched by political will and actual cash layout, are already threatening the non-achievement of the MDGs. Add to these the multiple crises that have visited upon our world in the decade of the effort to implement the MDGs—the crises of food, finance and fuel, and the crises in our economy and ecology—and here we have a potent mix of spoilers that will imperil the achievement of the MDG targets.”

During the International Youth Forum, a number of discussions around strategies for ensuring the realization of the MDGs for young people took place. Some of these include the need to prioritize which MDG issues are most relevant for a specific context; using art and other creative ways to communicate our messages to other young people, adopt a global citizenship perspective to ensure the link between the realities in our communities with others from across the world; the need to understand how national policies affect the realities of young people and the opportunities that are available for them to improve their chances in society; be inspired from what other young people are doing in other parts of the world and let this inspiration guide the work at the local level and organizing campaigns around children’s and youth access to education, health and environmental sustainability.

During group discussions they also stressed the importance of an institutional focus and commitment to realizing the MDGs. They noted that there are growing concerns that the MDGs will not be met before the deadline, and called for the world YMCA Movement to scale up efforts, especially in universal primary education, eradicating poverty and hunger, ensuring environmental sustainability and gender equality.

Telling our Stories

Throughout the Forum, young people who have been affected by Millennium Development Goal (MDG) issues, or are working on them, were invited to share their personal stories. This was followed by group discussions, with an opportunity for participants to share their own experiences, and strategise on how to strengthen their work on these issues. Below are four examples.

HIV/AIDS

Peter F. Borges, Executive Director of Human Touch India and former staff of YMCA Nagpur gave a presentation on “Meaningful youth participation in global HIV response”. He noted that as of 2007 an estimated 5.4 million youth were living with HIV, and 40% of all new infections are amongst 15 – 24 year olds, most of them female. Peter stressed that young people living with HIV often face discrimination, stigma and abuse and are often driven “underground”, too fearful to access health services. MDG 6 aims to stop and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other deadly diseases by 2015. Peter encouraged IYF delegates to support work towards MDG 6 by getting involved in global youth initiatives such as the HIV Youth Leader’s Fund and the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS.

Gender

Necta Montes Rocas, Regional Secretary for Asia and Pacific at the World Student Christian Federation spoke about gender inequalities and what can be done to help achieve gender justice. She noted that of the 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty around the world, 70% are women. Although women now represent 41% of all workers in developing countries, their wages are 30-40% less than those of men for comparable work. Globally, at least one in three women and girls is beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. Necta highlighted that although

the situation of women has improved in some parts of the world, we need to “raise our voices, continue to organize and strategise”, and promote women’s empowerment through our programmes.

Masculinities

Gleeson Job, Young Professional at the World Alliance of YMCAs, spoke about the need to challenge traditional forms of masculinity. He noted that dominant and violent masculinities are packaged in ways that appeal to young minds. Through the print media, films, advertisements, toys, and video games for example, young boys and men are taught at an early age that this is a man’s world and that violence is the norm. Gleeson shared some of the work being done by the YMCA in Trinidad and Tobago to help change this. Male “mentors” are identified and trained to work with young boys to facilitate dialogue on cultural gender stereotypes and traditional beliefs that can be harmful to both young men and women. Open communication, and positive conflict resolution between young men and women is also encouraged.

Peace building

Mariam Abuamasha, a young volunteer from YMCA East Jerusalem, spoke about her experience growing up in Palestine. She said, “Many nights we had to escape from our home because it was a very dangerous area...our house was shelled several times...I was scared to death...it stole two years of my childhood”. Mariam went on to say that keeping hope alive in these situations is nearly impossible, but strong community ties and relationships can make it easier. “Joining the YMCA made believe that I and any other person can make a change. Meeting people from different YMCAs all over the world, and hearing their stories, has made me realise that life is not easy everywhere. But working together, uniting our efforts for justice and peace, we can make a difference. It gives me hope.”

Youth Participation in Decision-Making

Throughout the Youth Forum, a small group of youth delegates was appointed to collect the various findings, recommendations and ideas put forward, and capture them in a youth statement that would be read at the opening ceremony of the World Council of YMCAs.

In his keynote address, Mr. Bautista encouraged youth delegates to take this statement seriously, and participate actively and meaningfully in the World Council to make their voices heard: “Young people, spare no time to assert your place in decision making. *Nothing about you without you.* Indeed, nothing about youth without the youth participating fully and directly in the development and implementation of policy about them. You are not hope for the future but of today. You have the power to redirect your energies to better, more peaceful and just uses. Through a message that you will craft and deliver, your gathering today, as a pre-Council event, has the potential to impact the World Council in ways that remind them of your anxieties about your lives and world and seek assurance from those gathered that your participation in acting upon your world and including you as full participants is a necessary ingredient of global citizenship.”

In their message, the young people asserted “We take pride in our lives as young people; We respect the efforts and experiences our peers have brought to this event; We value and cherish the opportunity to exchange this wealth of knowledge, good practices and experiential learning...Our responsibility is to provide a renewed focus on critical challenges affecting our identity, our mission and our purpose.” They acknowledged “the need to strengthen our movement from within through: harnessing technology to establish a worldwide network for knowledge sharing and leadership development, to attract and empower young leaders in the

YMCA of the future; strengthening the “C” in the YMCA, by upholding the Christian principles of the YMCA mission; and communicating the YMCA identity and brand in a coordinated manner, for the worldwide audience.” They concluded with a powerful statement, “We claim the ideals put forth by this forum, that we are “not subjects but citizens,” and there is “nothing about us without us.” (See Appendix 13b for full text)

Youth Concert: Tribute to Gaia

On Sunday 18 July, a crowd of 1,200 gathered in Hong Kong’s Victoria Park for “*Tribute to Gaia: A Concert on the Environment*” to celebrate Mother Earth with the power of music. This concert, part of the YMCA International Youth Forum, included dynamic and inspiring performances from Hong Kong, Thailand, Ghana, Trinidad and Malaysia. Through songs and music, the performers and YMCA youth expressed a common concern for global issues, especially with regard to environmental protection.

4. 17th WORLD COUNCIL OPENING CEREMONY AND KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

On the evening of Monday 19th July a spectacular Opening Ceremony was held at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre; which is located on the Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront, and is the premier cultural venue in Hong Kong. Infused with magnificent cultural performances, this memorable event brought together World Council participants from around the world, as well as special guests and media from Hong Kong.

During the Opening Ceremony, Mr. Martin Meißner, President, and Dr. Bartholomew Shaha, Secretary General of the World Alliance of YMCAs; Mr Yau Chung-Wan, Chair of the World Council Host Steering Committee, and Dr. Jai-Chang Park, President of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs welcomed participants to the “vibrant” city of Hong Kong, “Asia’s World City” for the 17th World Council of YMCAs.

Mr. Meißner also recalled that, “Coming together in a World Council reminds me this wonderful vision which tells us the Holy Scriptures: They will come from the East and the West, from the North and the South who will sit at the table of the Lord. We have come from the East and the West, from the North and the South and we will sit together, we will stand together, we will talk with each other, we will celebrate together. Since the beginning in 1855, the motto of the World Alliance is the biblical word “That they all may be one”. A World Council is a splendid opportunity to experience this unity – with all the diversity of culture, of language, of living conditions around this world.” (see Appendix 7 for full text of his Address).

World Alliance Secretary General, Dr. Bart Shaha gave the Roll Call and announced that there were 1,134 participants from 85 countries/territories (see Appendix 1).

The Honorable Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of Hong Kong SAR addressed the World Council Opening Ceremony affirming that “promoting global citizenship is part of Hong Kong’s aspiration of living up to being a truly global city. Nurturing global citizenship means providing a welcoming and caring society where personal freedoms are protected, as well as encouraging citizens to be responsible for one another and the environment we all share. Hosting the World Council of YMCAs in Hong Kong is a great opportunity for us to learn more about the YMCA and the contributions it makes at a global level.”

Mr. Amir Dossal, Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Partnerships, gave the keynote address at the Opening Ceremony. He noted that “In order to achieve true Global Citizenship, we must first build a world that meets the basic needs of all its people.

Unfortunately, nearly two billion people—our global neighbours—still live below the poverty line. There are only five years left until the 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). I know that you will join me in saying that **now** is the time to push forward. We need to redouble our collective efforts to ensure that the Millennium Development Goals become a reality.”

Speaking about the YMCA’s work on MDG issues he said, “With your help, we continue to make significant progress in key areas like school enrolment, child health, access to safe water, malaria control and AIDS treatment. But other targets, such as improving maternal health, fighting hunger, and expanding access to sanitation are lagging far behind.”

He went on to say “I am extremely inspired by the YMCA’s work... I was very impressed to learn, for instance, that YMCA Senegal has developed a successful “youth enterprise and capacity building project” which trains young people and helps them start their own businesses. With 83 million young people unemployed around the world, this is exactly the kind of initiative that will help youth develop the skills necessary to reach their full potential.

We at the United Nations were particularly happy to hear that this June, a group of young people from YMCAs around the world participated in the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. It is inspiring to see young people who feel such a responsibility to educate themselves about international standards on youth justice, and how they can actively participate. As we push forward to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, such engagement by young people **for** young people will ensure a more equitable world for future generations.

I urge you all to remain vigorously active in your YMCA programmes, and continue to develop new initiatives that will help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. There is strong recognition among Member States that non-governmental organizations like the YMCA are essential. You bring key resources to the fore—your knowledge, expertise, access, and global reach—that are critical in advancing the UN’s Goals. Your voice carries globally—you have a unique opportunity to bring about positive change” (see Appendix 5 for full text).

Dr. Park Seong-Won, scholar and ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, shared his reflections on the theme of global citizenship in the second keynote address delivered to World Council delegates on Tuesday 20th July.

Dr. Seong-Won began with a reflection on the situation of global society today. He noted that, “At the end of the first decade of this 21st century, our entire global civilization faces an integral crisis of multiple dimensions - a crisis which is rooted in the world’s power structure. It is a combination of economic, ecological and geo-political crises and at its base is a spiritual crisis.” Speaking about the economy he said, “The economy of life has been replaced by that of profit maximization for a select few at the cost and sacrifice of the life of many.” He went on to say that “global warming and climate change have [also] become one of the most serious life-threatening global problems that the whole creation is facing today...and on the geo-political level under the rule of global empire, wars have been radically transformed in nature, into a permanent and limitless war in time and space. In the name of peace and security, the global empire is exercising the "omnipotent" power of military weapons systems of mass destruction, and intensive and total war.”

To face the current global situation, Dr. Seong-Won said “I believe that what we need today is a Life-Giving Civilization. There is an urgent need for transforming the current life-stealing, life-killing and life-destroying civilization into a Life-Giving Civilization.” To illustrate this point,

Dr. Seong-Won shared two stories of pioneers who struggled to bring about life giving civilization. The first was Mahatma Gandhi, and Asian global citizen whose core values of non-violence, truth, simplicity, spiritual and practical purity, and faith need to be promoted in today's consumerist society. The second, was a 60-year old farmer by the name of Kimura Akinori, who struggled for many years, never giving up, to build a successful natural farming business; Akinori saw his failure as the world's failure. This is the attitude we need to transform the current life-killing civilization into a life-giving civilization.

Dr. Seong-Won concluded by urging the YMCA Movement to stand up as global citizens to make a change, "We need a citizen's movement on a global scale...if the YMCA gave up, it would mean global society gives up" (see Appendix 6 for full text).

5. GREETINGS FROM RELATED ORGANISATIONS

The 17th World Council welcomed delegates from related organisations who shared their messages of greetings and solidarity (see Appendix 8 for these messages). The messages included:

- Cardinal Walter Kasper, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican
- Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, World Council of Churches
- H. E. Nektarios, Metropolitan-Archbishop of Hong Kong and South East Asia, Orthodox Church
- Mr. Hirotooshi Fujii, Y's Men International
- Ms. Susan Brennan, World President, World YWCA
- Rt. Rev. John Tucker Mugabi Sentamu, Archbishop of York, read by Mr. Ian Green, National General Secretary, YMCA England
- Mr. Liberato Bautista, President, Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the United Nations

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, sent a message to the 17th World Council of YMCAs, congratulating the YMCA for its efforts in strengthening local communities; and its engagement in programme and advocacy work for the Millennium Development Goals (see Appendix 4 for full text). It may be noted that this is the first time the World Alliance received a message from the Secretary General himself.

6. WORSHIP

Worship took place early every morning in the main plenary hall before working sessions began. Creative and inspiring, the worship brought together songs, prayers, symbols and gestures from different countries and cultures around the world. One of the most important symbols was that of the earth – a large inflatable globe – that was used throughout the week to help illustrate the impact we are having on the earth and its resources.

Day One: The earth is God's

*"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it belongs to God,
Not to banks, not to corporations, not to politicians,
Neither to you nor to me."*

On the first day of worship, delegates affirmed one of the basic tenets of our faith: that the earth and all the resources in it are not ours but God's, and with this delegates were asked to approach the globe in the centre of the hall and with a gentle touch "express our longings for the earth."

Day Two: Awareness and repentance

*“Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in God’s holy place?
Those who have clean hands and pure hearts
Clean hands?
And pure hearts.
Who has clean hands and a pure heart?”*

Delegates were told that repentance begins with an awareness and acknowledgement of the “damage that we do to the world we share.” To demonstrate this they were invited to approach the globe and deface it with mud and paint, to “make visible the violence we do, even when we don’t want to or are not aware of it.” The act of “defacing” the globe put to light the simple truth: that we are all, in varying degrees, to blame for the earth’s degradation.

Days Three and Four: Earth Listening, Mending

*Voice of the earth
Speaking what we do not want to hear
Word of truth,
Amplifying what we muffle,
Song of mourning
Lying heavy on the soul,
Can you save us?
Have we burned too much, wasted too much, killed too much?
Is there some escape from the rising seas
From the cursed conflicts over diminishing resources?
Reconnect us, God, to the earth from which we come,
To the land which needs our care,
To each other
Through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

In 1977, two young Buddhist monks set out on a pilgrimage of peace through the Buddhist practice, Three Steps and a Bow. The whole journey covered 800 miles and took almost three years to complete. “They bowed in peace, for peace. Touching their foreheads to the ground, opening their hearts with one wish for the world. Peace. For everyone, everyday, everywhere¹.”

At the morning devotion on the third day of World Council, delegates imitated the practice, Three Steps and a Bow, to the sound of big drums, circling the forlorn, defaced and deflated globe. As they did so, they were told to open their hearts and listen to what the earth was telling them.

*Can we dream of the world God imagines,
New heavens and a new earth,
Where there are trees whose leaves are for the healing of the nations,
With God dwelling in our midst,
Light penetrating the deepest night,
Until God’s glory and honour fill the whole creation.*

After having listened, they started the work of mending. They were invited to “come and fix the globe” and to think of “concrete actions (we) might take to be a part of healing the world, of

¹ <http://www.urbandharma.org/udharma7/3steps.html>

letting it rest.” This time, many joined in to undertake that small symbolic action of “fixing” the globe.

Day Five: A Question of Balance

How can you forgive us, God?

Turn our feet to walk your path,

Lighten our step so our tread is harmony.

Balance our stride so our eyes stay focused on the way of Jesus Christ, your Beloved. Amen.

The Epistle reading for the morning devotions on the fifth day of World Council talked about St. Paul’s advice to the people of Corinth and their support for the beleaguered Christians of Palestine. He encouraged them to live as a genuine community where there was a fair balance, where the need of one was to be addressed by the abundance of the other. In order to demonstrate the need to restore a fair balance in the world, delegates were invited to lift the globe and pass it on using their feet and with their “back on the ground and (their) feet in the air, seek God’s guidance so those with little don’t have too little.”

Closing Worship: No longer strangers

“...So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.” (Ephesians 2:20-22)

In the closing worship delegates expressed their desire for a global human community that did not exclude the poor or the stranger. They dedicated their new leaders as global citizens who “will hold together those far and those near, keeping the whole structure joined together so that members of the YMCA all over the world live out their calling to be citizens with the saints, caring for each other and our common home, the earth.”

The worship was led by Rev. Terry MacArthur (USA), former Worship Director of the World Council of Churches, who was assisted by a Team with extensive experience in contemporary liturgy and music, including Ruth and Inchai Srisuwan (Thailand), Dr. Lim Swee Hong (Singapore), Nam Boo-won (Korea), Chan Yu Ping Simon and Vien Wong (Hong Kong), Cristina A. Dalope (Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs), and Clarissa Balan (World Alliance).

7. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMES

Cultural Sharing and Social Exposures

On Wednesday 21st July, the Host Committee staged a cultural evening with performances of traditional Chinese arts including the Chinese Lion Dance, a Kung Fu Dance, Chinese Opera and Chinese Diabolo.

YMCA Area Alliances were also invited to share performances / videos from their region, as part of a celebration of the diversity of cultures and traditions around the world.

On Thursday 22nd July World Council delegates had the opportunity to visit programmes run by YMCAs and other partner organizations in Hong Kong. These included: the Tung Chung Networking Project and Organic Farm (YMCA of Hong Kong), Ma Wan Park Noah’s Ark Resort (Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong), and Migrants Programme (International Social Service

Hong Kong). In addition to the social exposure visits, the host committee also organised a series of cultural activities that could be enjoyed by World Council delegates and their families including: Chinese Tea Ceremony, Calligraphy, Chinese Knotting, Tai Chi.

Global Village: National Movements and Area Exhibitions

At the Global Village, which was open every day during World Council, National Movements and Area Alliances had an allocated space to share their programme materials, stories, photos, posters, publications, handicrafts, audiovisuals, and even videos. Through these displays, YMCAs exchanged ideas and common interests, enabling the continued development of networks and new opportunities for co-operation.

Global Photo Competition and Raffle Draw

In November 2009 the World Alliance of YMCAs launched a global photo competition to gather images from around the world that effectively illustrated the YMCA's mission and activities, and its impact on the lives of young people and their communities in a creative way.

An international jury that included two professional photographers and a UNICEF representative selected the six winning entries that were acknowledged on the last day of the World Council. Those present collected their prizes – professional digital cameras - kindly donated by the Hong Kong Photographic and Optics Manufacturers Association. Winners of a raffle draw for six new computers were also presented with their prizes on the final day of World Council.

8. LEGISLATIVE MINUTES OF THE 17th WORLD COUNCIL

TUESDAY 20th JULY 2010

Welcome and President's Address

Martin Meißner, President, welcomed all participants to the 17th World Council of YMCAs and to the first official business session.

Approval of the Agenda

President Martin Meißner tabled the Agenda (see Appendix 3a and 3b).

Resolution 1: The World Council unanimously adopted the Agenda as proposed.

Approval of the Report of the 16th World Council

Resolution 2: The World Council unanimously approved the Report of the 16th World Council Meeting.

Approval of Actions taken by the Executive Committee 2002-2006

Resolution 3: The World Council unanimously approved the Actions taken by the Executive Committee during the period 2002-2006.

New Members

President Martin Meißner announced that the Executive Committee at its meeting on 18th July 2010, upon recommendation from the Committee on Constitution and Membership, recommended the acceptance of the YMCAs of Belarus, East Jerusalem, Macao and Russia as Full Members; and Y Care International as Associate. President Meißner then invited the representatives of these movements to sign the Book of Members.

The World council unanimously agreed with the acceptance of the new Members listed above.

Report of the Secretary General

Dr. Bart Shaha, Secretary General, presented the report for the period 2006-2010 (See Appendix 9). In his introduction, he began by reflecting on the fragility of our Earth, “a gift from God to women and men...rich in natural resources, biological and cultural diversity...that we are called to cultivate for the good of everyone”. He noted that unfortunately, in today's world, this is not the case, resources are unevenly distributed and the gap between the rich and poor is growing wider and wider. Because of this, Dr Shaha said, “ultimately it is the question of justice that we will need to address as human beings on this planet earth”.

He then delved into the founding spirit of the YMCA and citing the leadership of Henry Dunant and George Williams, he indicated that a key focus of the YMCA was to work for justice and unity of all peoples.

Speaking about the 17th World Council of YMCAs he said, “it will be our task to share with each other our experiences and insights and join together on common issues to create more

impact...we will look at our world, we will analyse the issues people face, we will identify good practices and together deliberate on how we could all be *one world*, one community, with everyone – from North America to Asia and the Pacific Islands, from the Middle East to Africa, from Europe to Latin America and the Caribbean. We will open our hearts and minds to become true *global citizens*.”

Dr. Shaha concluded his introduction by emphasizing that “each one of us is called to blossom in spirituality. As Christians, we recognize what Jesus Christ brought to the attention of his disciples, that “one does not live by bread alone” (Mt. 4, 4). On our journey to eternal life, while we walk through the paths of this earth, we are called to grow in *spirituality*.” He went on to say that “the YMCA offers an excellent opportunity for blossoming in spirituality because the YMCA is action-orientated”, and gave the example of many YMCAs who “have been able to develop cutting-edge responses focusing on transformation of long established practices and structures of injustice and underdevelopment”. This transformational agenda “needs strong spirituality” and lies at the heart of the YMCA Movement.

Dr. Shaha went on to report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Movement Strengthening:

A. Capacity Building and Resource Mobilisation (*see Report on the Global Operating Plan and Resource Mobilisation, Wednesday 22nd July*)

B. *Advocacy on Issues Relevant to Young People*

Reporting on advocacy and programmes, Dr. Shaha stated that the work in this area has “evolved greatly since the Mexico and Durban World Councils” and that “this evolution has been accompanied by a growing sense of belonging and confidence on the role and relevance of the World Alliance within the global YMCA movement.” Defining advocacy within the YMCA context, he said that it was necessary to go beyond the traditional notion of advocacy given that the YMCA is a membership movement and that change needed to happen not only at the level of policy but also in terms of attitudes and mindsets. Empowerment, and in the case of the YMCA, the empowerment of young people should form an integral element of advocacy. Thus, the concept of hands-on advocacy, which integrates knowledge with practical training and confidence building held within a venue where these could be practiced and put to work immediately has been the focus of the World Alliance’s work on advocacy.

Concretely, this concept of advocacy was implemented taking advantage of the opportunities presented by international conferences such as the International AIDS Conference in Mexico in 2008 and the UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in 2009. In addition, the World Alliance has been working in partnership with Y Care International since 2008 in implementing an international advocacy strategy around youth justice targeted at the UN Human Rights Council.

The leadership development of young people has been a priority of the World Alliance for many years now. During this quadrennium, apart from the Young Professional Programme, the World Alliance had organized a ten-day leadership training event in Thailand, in January 2008, gathering together around 30 participants from across the world. Combining analytical inputs and workshops with experiential learning in different communities in Thailand the youth participants developed action points aimed at addressing issues related to environmental issues, fair trade and economic justice issues, gender justice and children’s rights, among others.

The promotion of global citizenship as an outlook and a means to address the link between local and global issues was a resolution put forward at the 2006 World Council in Durban. To implement this resolution, the World Alliance based much of its work on leadership development and advocacy on the concept of global citizenship. In addition, the World Alliance had also organized a workshop on global citizenship in October 2009, in Coventry, England, giving national movements who are already implementing programmes on global citizenship the opportunity to share their experiences as well as hear from other organizations like OXFAM and UNICEF.

Bart Shaha also reported on the work done in partnership with other international and ecumenical organizations like the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA), the Alliance of Youth CEOs, the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the UN (CONGO) and the International Coordinating Meeting of Youth NGOs (ICMYO). Bart also reported on other important activities that the World Alliance had been involved in such as the preparatory meetings for the launch of a UN Decade for Interfaith Dialogue and Understanding for Peace, the advocacy work on Palestine and the support for the work of East Jerusalem and Gaza YMCAs as well as the International Conference on the World Food Crisis of which the World Alliance had co-organized with the EAA.

In concluding the section of his report on Advocacy and Programmes, Dr. Shaha identified some major elements that underpin the global advocacy work of the World Alliance. He emphasized the potential of the global YMCA movement for effecting change at the global level and the strong credibility that comes from being a membership movement. He underscored the need for an advocacy that is pragmatic and hands-on and focused at empowering young people to be advocates on issues that impact their lives.

In ending this section of the report, he stated: “Global advocacy is both a gift and a responsibility. It is a gift because it offers the YMCA movement the chance to make the Gospel message a reality in our time. It is a gift because through advocacy, we can make an impact beyond our communities, beyond the boundaries of our nations and regions to embrace the whole *oecumene*, not only human beings but all living beings on this planet. Global advocacy is our heritage, a responsibility handed down to us by our predecessors, by many generations before us and a legacy bequeathed to us by the likes of Henry Dunant and John R. Mott, both visionaries, both Nobel Peace Prize recipients. If the World Alliance is to continue to be relevant to the needs of its member movements as well as the youth and communities they serve then we must continue to be on the cutting-edge of things; we must be courageous enough to speak out even if it means facing tough questions; we must be innovative in our programmes for young people and be sincerely committed to making their voices heard in many platforms locally, nationally and globally. Global advocacy calls on the YMCA to blaze new trails and to recover this character that the YMCA has been known for since its inception.”

C. Communications

Throughout 2006 – 2010, ensuring effective communications and knowledge sharing within the Movement continued to be a priority for the World Alliance of YMCAs. We used a diverse range of print, multimedia and web-based tools to deliver news updates, launch emergency appeals, as well as share good practices, resources and training within the Movement. The World Alliance also used these tools to communicate the work of the YMCA Movement to external audiences including other civil society partners, potential donors, and the general public.

In September 2008, the World Alliance's Communications strategy was updated to align with an emerging focus on resource mobilisation. This new strategy gave emphasis to increasing the visibility and recognisability of the YMCA, including by developing the YMCA brand; clearly communicating the impact of the YMCA to external audiences; and effectively positioning the YMCA on key issues affecting young people. This resulted in some changes to existing tools such as the website and quarterly magazine, as well as the development of new communications tools including a popular Annual Report.

D. Disaster Preparedness and Response

The World Alliance has developed an Emergency Coordination Protocol that is currently under consultation with Areas and national movements. This protocol, already applied during recent disaster coordination efforts, will be made public and available to the world-wide movement in autumn 2010. This protocol is accompanied by a set of templates for emergency appeals, evaluation reports and financial reporting.

In 2010, the World Alliance was asked to provide support in the coordination of international YMCA partner responses to a number of emergencies all across the globe including in Haiti and Chile. Between 2006-2010, the World Alliance was also involved in the dissemination of information, coordination and/or conceptualisation of a series of other emergency responses, such as: in 2009 in South Sudan after heavy fighting and displacement of population; in Sri Lanka after hundreds of thousands of civilians were caught up in the crossfire between Government forces and Tamil rebels; and heavy floods in Machala, Ecuador.

In his conclusion, Dr Shaha noted: "the journey from Durban to Hong Kong, from the 16th to 17th World Council has been quite eventful, to say the least! Much of the road we have travelled on has been difficult and challenging; but we tried, given our limitations, to reach new destinations. Taking the mandate from Durban and translating the mandate into a Strategic Plan, we are pleased to note some significant milestones we have reached during the quadrennium:

- An increased focus on movement strengthening through the Global Operating Plan framework involving many more national movements, as well as the beginning of an unprecedented high level dialogue and engagement on the issue of resource mobilization;
- Alignment of our communications work with the needs of movement strengthening, resource mobilization and advocacy;
- The strengthening of our work on global advocacy and its intimate link to youth empowerment and leadership development."

Report of the Treasurer

Fernando Ondarza, Treasurer, presented the Report (see Appendix 10). He noted that the YMCA had reacted to the challenges posed by the global financial crises, and the ensuing unemployment and instability, with creativity and imagination. Mr. Ondarza gave an overview of the World Alliance finances from 2006 – 2010, including an update on Fair Share Revenues investments, John R. Mott Fund, and funds raised to support the Global Resource Mobilisation process. Speaking about the latter, Mr Ondarza recommended that in order to ensure complete transparency and accountability, the World Alliance and other donors should be provided with audited accounts from recipients of Resource Mobilisation project funds.

Appointment of the Steering Committee

President Martin Meißner announced the Steering Committee which comprised:

World Alliance Officers: Martin Meißner (Chair), Samuel D. Stephens, Fernando Ondarza; Chair of World Council Planning Committee/Europe: Martin Bauer; Africa: Sophie Ahadji; Asia and Pacific: Maria Cristina Miranda; USA: Ken Colloton; Host Committee: Yau Chung Wan, Chuck Allison, Laurence Yick; World Alliance: Bart Shaha.

Martin Meißner moved the motion for adoption of the Steering Committee which was seconded by Leopoldo Moacir Lima, Brazil.

Resolution 4: The World Council unanimously approved the composition of the Steering Committee, with one abstention.

Thereafter, Martin Meißner moved a motion of appointment of Paul Le Gros as Honorary Legal Adviser for the 17th World Council, based on his experience and knowledge of the Constitution of the World Alliance.

Resolution 5: The World Council unanimously adopted the appointment of Mr. Paul le Gros as Legal Adviser for the 17th World Council of YMCAs.

Report from the Committee on Elections

President Martin Meißner invited Paul Le Gros to submit the report of the Committee on Elections. The Committee which was constituted at the time of the Executive on Sunday 18 July 2010, underwent slight changes in its composition as announced by Paul Le Gros, comprising finally: Paul Le Gros (Chair); Peter Malone; Peter Posner; Lucía Quintanilla; Terry Radcliffe; James Ekow Rhule; Andrew Seele.

Martin Meißner thanked Paul Le Gros and the Committee for their hard work, especially for the huge amount of correspondence that had to be circulated several times requesting enough nominations from national movements for the various positions.

WEDNESDAY 21st JULY 2010

Report on the Global Operating Plan and Resource Mobilisation

Rev. Samuel Stephens, presiding the session, introduced Simon Pluess, World Alliance Executive Staff, who made a PowerPoint presentation on the Global Operating Plan 2010-2014. Simon Pluess thereafter gave the floor to Bart Shaha and Johan Vilhelm Eltvik to report on the Resource Mobilisation process (see Appendix 11).

Global Operating Plan

In 2003, the World Alliance of YMCAs developed and adopted the first Global Operating Plan for Movement Strengthening (GOP). Under the GOP, a strong YMCA movement was defined as 'one which has mission clarity, is socially relevant and institutionally viable'. At the Movement Strengthening Summit during the 16th World Council of YMCAs in Durban in 2006, we reviewed the Movement Strengthening achievements since 2003 and we decided that it should continue to be our focus in the next 4 years.

Impact of the Global Operating Plan (GOP) Phase II (2006 – 2010)

Today, 24 YMCA movements and Area Alliances have engaged in a GOP process and are being accompanied and supported by international partner groups.

Over the last four years, most international YMCA partners have reviewed their way of supporting other YMCAs and aligned their strategies with the GOP framework. Bilateral programme support is of course still a reality and is still a very valuable form of support for many YMCAs. However, we have learnt that we are better and more efficient when we do things together and we want to encourage more international YMCAs to work through the GOP framework.

Overall, GOP has brought new impetus, vision and vibrancy to all those YMCAs that have been involved in the process. Some YMCAs have even exceeded their targets and results have been beyond expectations.

There has been a demonstrable impact on mission clarity. All movements involved have indicated that their sense of mission has been sharpened, with most having developed new strategic plans with sharper vision and mission statements. Many of these have clear statements of mission that reflect the real needs of young people and these feed into strategic plans and programming. There has been a huge growth in new initiatives. Many new signature programmes are emerging; some being developed at the Area level and some being shared internationally such as global citizenship education, youth empowerment programmes, juvenile justice programmes, and projects with migrant communities.

YMCAs have increasingly embedded in regional or local partnerships with governments or NGOs rather than being seen as competitors for limited funds. Many GOP focus countries have started to build on their existing assets from the past, such as land or infrastructure, to develop income generating services. There has been considerable success in many countries. Others lack the necessary investors to capitalise on existing assets; others the necessary business skills.

Generally, GOP countries have also experienced Membership Growth, and a recent survey in Africa suggests, that this growth had been much stronger in GOP countries than in YMCAs with bilateral partner relationships only.

Knowledge Sharing

In addition to the country focus strategy, the sharing of knowledge and good practices is another key GOP strategy. In 2008, the World Alliance initiated a *Global Knowledge Sharing Task Group* with the aim of identifying the most appropriate tools for good knowledge sharing. This was an exciting dialogue across the Movement and the group came up with a certain number of pilot initiatives that are starting to bear fruits.

A “*Tools and Good Practice Library*” was developed on the World Alliance Extranet (<http://www.ymca.int/extranet.0.html>) and launched in 2009. Today over 100 good practices, policy, campaign and programme examples can be found, as well as many links to excellent external resources. The Global Task Group also launched the “YMCA Global Online Community”, which is a social networking platform hosted by the World Alliance, and geared towards collaboration and knowledge exchange between groups of people. It already hosts 15 groups with approximately 214 users.

Lessons Learnt

Over the last four years, important learning has been gathered through the various GOP processes:

- change cannot be imposed from outside in a worldwide Movement of independent and autonomous members, and every National Movement has to take full ownership of its own change.
- engaging in a movement strengthening process by participating in a Country Focus Group is seldom a one-off event. The process often lasts for several years, and can pull substantial resources and energy from each of the participants in this process.
- there is no “one size fits all” solution in the process, as a strong focus is given to contextualisation of the strategy.
- We need to give capacity building through training of staff and volunteers a priority, especially young people, and we need to develop common standards.

Resource Mobilisation

The YMCA is a movement in which being sustainable means being able to consistently mobilise resources. We know that increasing our impact and involving more youth and communities in our mission requires us to be financially stable, and that this in turn requires that all YMCAs have the ability to attract funding. In its simplest form, resource mobilisation means bringing new funds and new fund sources to the YMCA— locally, nationally, and internationally. These fund sources can include individual donations, foundation and corporate grants, government contracts, and income-generating programmes.

Since 2008, the World Alliance and all Area Alliances have created a coordinated strategy for YMCA resource mobilisation at the local, national, regional, and global levels. National movements have contributed to shaping this strategy, which has been presented to and approved by the Executive Committee.

The World Alliance has tested this strategy in all regions of the world. With help from local and national movements, resource mobilisation is being brought to life in all corners of the world, from Belarus to Zambia, and from Cambodia to Trinidad and Tobago.

The World Alliance has created and tested a working model to help advance resource mobilisation across the global movement. This model provides us with a framework for success. It includes the things that must be accomplished in harmony for resource mobilisation to take place. These things are: 1) Developing programmes that have genuine relevance to, and impact on, youth and communities; 2) Communicating this impact so the YMCA is recognised for its value; 3) And using this impact and visibility as the basis to solicit and raise new funds. All of these elements—developing programmes, communicating impact, and raising funds—must work together. And all of these things require that we begin with a solid foundation of capacity in each and every YMCA.

Working with this model helped us assess and understand that we have work to do in building our capacity to mobilise resources as a movement. Today, critical capacity building is taking place worldwide. It is happening based on the definition of eight categories of capacity building that have been established as essential to resource mobilization.

Building Capacity

Africa has created and successfully piloted a peer-review mechanism supporting capacity development; it is now being expanded to more movements on the continent. In Latin America and the Caribbean national movements are implementing custom plans developed based on analysis—these movements went through a process to actually map their capacity levels today. YMCA Europe Resource Teams are supporting capacity building in several local and national movements. In Asia and Pacific, many local and national leaders are now trained in proposal writing. Significant donor research is now being conducted in Africa, Asia and Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Developing Programmes

We have learned that three particular programme topics leverage the unique strengths of the YMCA and have donor appeal. These are HIV and AIDS, migration, and global citizenship. The Latin America and Caribbean Alliance is systematising programme practices—and providing YMCAs as well as YMCA donors with new ways to understand and achieve effective change. Asia and Pacific is pursuing a wide range of innovative programmes—including new approaches for engaging youth in global citizenship and peace building.

Canada is steadily growing the number of YMCAs involved with international work, and these YMCAs are reporting new levels of benefit—for their organisations and for the young people participating in this work. USA is collaborating with 19 local YMCAs that are committed to being Global Centers of Excellence—these YMCAs are conducting programmes involving immigrant and newcomer populations, global philanthropy, and global education and leadership. Europe is focused on impact assessment—a topic that is somewhat new to us—beginning with study of YMCA HIV prevention programmes supporting youth in East and Central Europe. World Alliance is developing youth leaders and advocates, and has helped empower young people from more than 50 national movements through training programmes on HIV and AIDS, juvenile justice, and climate change.

Communicating Impact

New structures are being established, for example the Africa Alliance is helping several national movements form communications committees. New websites are springing up everywhere—including in the Area Alliances in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, and Asia and Pacific, and in the World Alliance as well. These sites represent a departure from our past—and are created to make it much easier for donors and funders to understand and work with the YMCA. New annual reports have been created for Asia and Pacific, Africa, Europe and the World Alliance. And important brand development processes are underway in Africa, Canada, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the USA.

Raising Funds

New funds and fund sources are already being generated in all regions through our **coordinated strategy**. For example: 100% of Zambia board members are YMCA donors; And annual giving by board and staff members is **increasing** in São Paulo, Bogota, and Montevideo. New annual campaigns are also underway in many national movements—including South Africa, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The **Skip to Save** campaign—known as S2S—has raised US\$5,600 using social media to engage youth in six Asia and Pacific national movements. We are developing new ways to partner deeply with new players to generate new resources and increase our ability

to serve youth and communities. Cultivating relationships with businesses generated national movement support for YMCA Russia valued at USD 200,000.

All of the work to date was made possible by nearly USD 500,000 provided to support the launch of resource mobilisation by more than 250 donors, including many individuals, some national movements, and the World Alliance.

Questions and Answers

Kano Yamamoto, Tokyo YMCA, remarked that accountability was not mentioned in the presentation and reminded of its importance for any YMCA to be successful.

Bart Shaha responded that the World Alliance has created a Protocol of accountability with volunteer oversight (Officers) to approve and follow-up on projects and programmes.

Johan Vilhelm Eltvik highlighted that the report involved the work that has been developed in the last two and a half years and how it has changed the way the World Alliance and the Global Staff Team work together. He welcomed questions but particularly advice and feedback to assist and encourage them in moving further.

Samuel Stephens reminded that Movement Strengthening and Resource Mobilisation are intertwined. Movement Strengthening enhances institutional capability, which means good governance, which in turn grants credibility to the institution and hence accountability is ensured.

Ric Odom, New Zealand, asked if there had been any success in engaging professional external fundraisers versus YMCA internal fundraisers and about the advantages of centralised versus local fund raising.

Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, replied that fund raising appeals to the commitment of all - staff and volunteers, with professional assistance. Funding sources will be at world/area level but the principle of subsidiarity targets to a local YMCA fulfilling its mission within its own context.

Scott Haldane, Canada, indicated that YMCA Canada fully supports this process and congratulated the World Alliance and the Global Staff Team for the informative presentation, which depicts the success and challenges of two years' efforts. Resource Mobilisation is new to many but all can get involved. He mentioned two stages: first to learn the term, its meaning and how it can change the YMCA; and second, once understood to invest and, realise the returns – it is a never ending process.

Solomon Benjamin, India, recalled the distinctiveness of YMCA not as an NGO but a missionary movement. Fundraising is not to maintain the organisation but to enhance the mission for which the organisation stands.

David Thompson, Central London YMCA, described his YMCA's experience of social enterprise that has been successful and sustainable in generating funds and willingness to share their knowledge, for example, through e-learning at an economic price and large accessibility.

Manuel Camarena, Mexico, talked about the YMCA image as trademark when thinking about local, national and international donors, for example the YMCA of Mexico City receives good support from Korean companies, thanks to the image that the YMCA enjoys in Korea. Thus there is need to connect world and local efforts to raise funds and assist the process, since

common criteria for all YMCAs are being proposed to present projects, monitor and report on these.

Alveiro Valencia, Colombia, told about the YMCA internal know-how exemplifying his local YMCAs' skills in merchandising their products, services and programmes to generate income that is used to train young people.

Skills building workshops

From Wednesday 21st July to Friday 23rd, one session per day was allocated to skills building workshops and dialogues on cutting-edge issues that impact YMCA work, not only for empowerment and skills development but also to share expertise and knowledge for the benefit of the whole movement.

National Movements submitted proposals to organise a Workshop on a relevant topic. An Advisory Committee screened the proposals to ensure the quality of the workshops, advised World Alliance staff on National Movements that could be invited to offer excellent skills building workshops as well as mentor those that needed assistance in preparing their workshop.

In total, twenty-five workshops were run concurrently during the three days mentioned above. These one and a half hour sessions were organised around three main topics: institutional capacity building and resource mobilisation, advocacy and programmes, and communications and branding. Among the 75 workshop proposals received, around 67 different workshop themes from YMCAs across the world were presented.

THURSDAY 22nd JULY 2010

Martin Meißner introduced the session on “Strengthening the YMCA: Investing in Youth and Community Mobilising Resources to deliver Challenge 21” and handed the lead over to Bob Tobin, Consultant.

Bob Tobin in turn introduced Courtney Lawrence who outlined the focus of the session. She explained that the goal is to optimise resources through innovation and creativity, and to work across boundaries. The YMCA is one of the world's largest and broadest youth organisations and should do more to enhance this potential. She stated that this is no criticism, but a call to action and presented the Youth Forum creative team's production on resource mobilisation.

Bob Tobin explained that the session connected to the discussion on the reports of the Global Operating Plan and Resource Mobilisation of Wednesday 21 July. Bob Tobin introduced the panel composed of Tom Coon (Canada), Edward Gboe (Liberia), Gail Glasser (NAYDO: North American YMCA Development Organisation), Olga Lukina (Belarus), Amanda Nguyen (Vietnam), Siphso Sokehla (South Africa).

Edward Gboe explained that YMCA Liberia works in partnership with other NGOs, with a budget of USD 1 million, of which 10% comes from each local Association and membership contributions, 5% comes from grants and special project contributions. A subsidy from the Government of Liberia was negotiated by demonstrating the YMCA's impact on addressing government targets and therefore a grant was secured with an increase of 900%. Further funding comes from the YMCA of USA.

Amanda Nguyen described the programme ‘Skip to Serve’, which calls for considerable fundraising to train 600 hundred young leaders. Support was received from six Associations and the strategy for development involves:

- Mixed resources, especially external.
- Youth and young professionals are primary target. Fifty seven youth delegates from Asia and Pacific collected USD 2000 by donating the cost of one meal.
- Communicating the work that is being carried out (eg. YouTube).

Tom Coon reported that YMCA Canada serves 2 million Canadians and is proud to say that no one is refused because services are not available. USD 26 million are raised annually through the Strong Kids campaign to fund subsidised access to services. However, it is not just mobilising funds but leaders, with a commitment to engage and include all, irrespective of background. Capacity building is a major focus; not just infrastructure, but programmes, services, leadership and international development (United Nations target of 0.7% of income for international development).

Olga Lukina indicated that it is difficult to fundraise in Belarus, apart from membership fees. There is only one official government fund grant organisation, which directs where money can come from. So, resource mobilisation in YMCA Belarus means mobilising human resources. The national council could not afford to rent an office but it still exists – it is people that counts, not a building. The YMCA receives support from international partners, including through YERT (GOP) process. Siphso Sokhela stated that fund-raising is a critical aspect of their national strategy – to move from dependency on international partners to raising 60% funds locally. The YMCA is increasingly taking advantage of corporate social responsibility, particularly regarding youth development, and of expertise from partners within and outside South Africa. The YMCA needs assistance to ‘promote its story’ to the corporate audience and be enabled to build structures, systems and processes, and find better ways to measure their impact as effective partners on communities, institutions and individuals.

Gail Glasser identified how NAYDO showed what the GOP three-legged stool means. NAYDO provides learning to all partners about philanthropy (1000 volunteers and learning as much from a small Y as from a national movement), providing flexibility to respond to crises. At the 2010 meeting 21 countries came together, with representatives world-wide. There is now a young professionals group, which meets alongside NAYDO, to train young leaders to become an international – not only a US - opportunity.

Bob Tobin reflected on a question from YMCA New Zealand about local versus national resourcing. This depends on the situation. Some YMCAs are only ready for local fundraising. In the US some are beginning to look at regional fundraising. Some outside expertise may be needed, but also increasing resources internally. Each and everyone has a role to play in resource mobilisation . However, people need to have accountability for it.

Bob Tobin requested participants to reflect on each one’s role in resource mobilisation:

- What is important? How critical will be the work and what social impact does your YMCA intend to have in the next four years?
- Then, what is needed? What resources are needed for your YMCA to develop this work and how can they be mobilised?

Bob Tobin introduced Dr. Philip Kwok, Chair of the Committee on Resource Mobilisation. Excellent results have been achieved; but much more needs to be done in order to mobilise further and more resources. Young people are increasingly being involved and taking the lead.

The Youth Declaration challenged to strengthen the ‘C’ in the YMCA - each has an opportunity to contribute according to his/her possibilities.

Bob Tobin summarised the discussions that took place and hoped for each to leave the session more equipped to address resource mobilisation.

Johan Vilhelm Eltvik introduced the Investors’ Circle meeting, as an initiative to secure resources to move forward in resource mobilisation.

Investor’s Circle

Over 100 YMCA leaders from all over the world took part in the Investor’s Circle meeting that took place on Thursday 22nd July 2010. Dr Bart Shaha, Secretary General of the World Alliance of YMCAs, and Rev. Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, General Secretary of YMCA Europe, shared information on a resource mobilisation process that was initiated in 2008, and that is already reaping significant rewards, at national, regional and world level to improve the YMCA’s fund-raising capacity. In particular, work has been done with YMCAs in the areas of governance, financial management, communications, programme development, and proposal writing. This work, financed by an initial seed fund of USD 500,000, has already generated over USD 1million.

During the Investors’ Circle meeting, YMCA Area leaders from Africa, Asia and Pacific, Europe, and Latin America presented plans for Phase II of this work (2010-2014), which aims to raise a further USD 3 million from external sources to strengthen YMCAs worldwide and increase their impact on youth and communities. Impressed and inspired by the success of Phase I, 34 individuals and 15 YMCAs, representing all the regions, pledged instantly financial support to continue work to increase the visibility, social relevance, and organizational capacity of YMCAs so that they are better placed to raise, manage and report on funds from external donors.

The Circle was presented with a “million dollar investment opportunity”; the chance to invest in the future of the global YMCA Movement and change the lives of thousands more young people around the world. YMCA England sent a powerful message to other National Movements, by making the first pledge of USD 50,000 to support this process. John Lilley of YMCA Canada was the first to make a personal commitment to be an individual donor to this process with USD 1,000. In total, over USD 100,000 was pledged from YMCAs, individual staff, volunteers and youth.

FRIDAY 23rd JULY 2010

President Martin Meißner gave the floor to Rebecca Morton Doherty, World Alliance Executive Staff, and Bob Tobin, Consultant, who made a presentation on “Strengthening the YMCA: Towards a Global YMCA Brand” (see Appendix 12).

Bob Tobin began by introducing World Council delegates to the concept of brand and its significance for effective resource mobilization. He noted that “Resource mobilisation requires being known—this is a reality. Being known—being recognized—is very important. However, and this is an important however, it is not enough. Becoming known for social impact is essential. We need to be known for what we do and the value we bring to our communities. And we need to be known in ways that people care about. It becomes clearer and clearer to all of us that visibility must be connected to impact.”

Defining the concept of branding, Mr. Tobin said, “branding is a way to make your every day work more visible and more connected to your audiences. It is the way people feel and think about your organization. It is their perception of you. It is your image. It lives in the minds of the people who recognise you. Ideally the perception of your organization in the minds of your audience, matches the perception you desire.

Rebecca Morton Doherty continued the presentation, speaking about the issues of brand and visibility in the YMCA context. She began by sharing that in 2008, Area leaders from Africa, Europe and Asia and Pacific expressed concern that the YMCA’s visibility with the general public, media and other civil society actors was low in their regions, and there were often misconceptions about the mission and activities of the YMCA. In the World Alliance Quadrennial Survey, conducted in 2009, several National Movements also expressed that some of their greatest organisational challenges related to brand, image and visibility, and that they believed it was important to clearly distinguish the YMCA from other youth-focused NGOs. Ms Morton Doherty shared that the situation in the Americas was different, as the YMCA is very well known, with for example 95% of Canadians and 91% of the general public in the USA who are aware of the YMCA. However, according to reports, in the USA, despite being so well known, the YMCA has also struggled with its identity, and with being known for the right reasons.

Ms. Morton Doherty noted that work is being done in all Areas, as well as at World Alliance level to improve communications and brand, including new websites, annual reports, training in communications, and branding processes, and she provided examples from each of the regions.

She then shared reflections on the case for a global branding strategy for the YMCA Movement, noting that there was interest and willingness in the Movement, that it would require a collaborative and movement-wide process, as well as time and additional resources. She concluded by inviting World Council delegates to think further about the question at the heart of this discussion: “How can we work together globally to increase the visibility of all YMCAs, and improve perception?”

Questions and Answers

A participant from Africa enquired about how to improve information sharing and communications among YMCA students for effective awareness/visibility in ‘mock’ United Nations General Assembly.

Bob Tobin responded that the example given was a reason for the global movement to engage in this question, to develop the best possible way to communicate what the YMCA represents and develop strategies to increase visibility for carrying the message to groups, such as the United Nations.

Bart Shaha reminded about the section on representation in international organisations in the Secretary General’s Report and how this has enhanced significantly the YMCA profile and impact in this fora.

Beate Turck, Germany, commented that for branding to be effective current and accurate data and information from national movements need to be shared (for example reply in time to questionnaires sent by the World Alliance requesting updated information).

Bob Tobin reaffirmed that data and information/stories of social impact that the YMCA is creating from each part of the movement are key for a communications strategy.

Simon Badman, England, drew attention to the value-based foundation of any message emanating from the movement in a branding strategy.

Bob Tobin pointed out that branding certainly includes an internal foundational ingredient but is targeted to an audience. The message reflects the values and benefits the targeted audience. Hence, there is an internal and external dimension to get the authenticity of the brand lined up with the beneficial promise and with the clearing compelling message.

Cees Bremmer, Netherlands, asked about the purpose of having a stronger visibility.

Bob Tobin responded that to achieve stronger visibility, three points need to be considered: target audience, purpose/objectives with regard to audience, and the approach/method to convey the message to the audience to achieve the purpose.

Russell Leech, New Zealand, requested that the presentation be accessible for better grasping of its contents. Bob Tobin agreed that within the spirit of transparency, the presentation will be available and Bart Shaha confirmed that all presentations would be posted on the World Alliance web site.

Sandy McIntyre, Canada, enquired about how to preserve the fundamental identity of the YMCA as Christian movement, while for certain audiences, this might create tension.

Bob Tobin recommended to focus on the aims that the YMCA has and will continue to have in common. These assets should be enough to show the value of the YMCA to key audiences and thus provide the basis to increase visibility.

Solomon Benjamin, India, commented that when branding an identity the institution's reputation is the key element, not only in terms of funds but the process adopted in Resource mobilisation which gives the identity of a distinctive missional organisation. For example a YMCA conducts profit-making enterprises for mission whose ultimate target is to invest proceedings in transforming the lives of people.

Bob Tobin underlined that what is most important to build visibility at all levels is how funds from enterprises are being spent, that is defining, documenting and communicating the impact within the community.

Evelyne Gueye, Senegal, shared her concern about the considerable resources that would be demanded from some movements and Areas to engage in branding when they have difficulties to run their day-to-day operations.

Rebecca Morton agreed that branding demands funds but referred to the experience of the Latin American and Caribbean Alliance which is developing this work with minimum resources.

Bob Tobin stressed that each volunteer should know and share stories of YMCA impact - this is an economic form of promotional campaign.

Fernando Ondarza, Mexico, talked about the image bank that YMCA Mexico maintains and also taking advantage of Internet, as a new way of communication to reach larger audiences at low cost.

Carlos Sanvee, Africa Alliance, warned that not all areas of the world enjoy the same level of technology.

Bob Tobin recapped the two latest comments recognising that the movement should move forward from its present status and find the right balance between high-technology and high-touch approach. There are probably opportunities in each movement to work with both and move them forward in its own way.

Dr. Sun Te-hsiung, Taiwan, pointed out that when programmes benefit the community, the beneficiaries ‘tell the good story’ to others; hence, they promote the good image and worth of the YMCA. He also drew attention to cooperation with other NGOs, so that the scale of work becomes larger, including Government support to programmes, which will broaden the institution’s image.

Bob Tobin went over the above comment which re-affirmed the value of networks as the most credible way to communicate, and partnerships to gain access to other audiences to gain credibility.

Sofia Laborde, Uruguay, told about LACA’s communications strategy which has a main internal focus sharing the successful stories of the region, while the Africa Alliance has concentrated on an external image. There are obviously strengths and weakness in both approaches and a way should be found to combine both.

Bob Tobin re-stated that there is no single path but a common commitment to move forward.

Amanda, Vietnam, pointed out that since communication involves substantial funds that might not be available, specific measurable objectives should be set to have real impact; and enquired about how to increase the YMCA image/visibility in all parts of the world.

Bob Tobin restated that when resources and capacity are limited for communications, specific objectives should be defined and measurable in order to create visibility, awareness and understanding of the YMCA to start new partnerships.

Dean Barton Smith, Australia, reminded that communications should utilise an easy language to be understandable and convey the message accurately to all.

Bob Tobin asserted that attention should be paid to accessibility of language, that is ensuring that people easily understand the message and engage in the YMCA.

SATURDAY 24th JULY 2010

The day’s programme began with Worship as in the previous days.

The President of the World Alliance, Martin Meißner, welcomed all to the session. He congratulated the newly elected members of the Executive Committee on their success at the elections conducted the previous day.

Report of the Writing Team

The Writing Group, a small team of YMCA experts from across the Movement, was established to help the World Council clearly identify priorities for the World Alliance for 2010 – 2014 in

three key areas: Movement Strengthening and Resource Mobilisation, Programmes and Advocacy, Communications and Branding. To do this, the Writing Group drew from several sources including: outcomes of the International Youth Forum, written reports to the World Council, plenary presentations and debates, and workshops. The Writing Group tested its findings in three working groups made up of World Council delegates; a final report was then presented to the full World Council for its endorsement.

The leader of the Writing Team, Chris Roles, Director of Y Care International, presented the Report of the Writing Team (see Appendix 14) to the plenary for discussion and adoption. Below is a brief summary of the main findings of the report:

1: Movement Strengthening and Resource Mobilisation

Movement strengthening must remain the top strategic priority for the World Alliance and the global YMCA Movement, and Resource Mobilisation needs to be its main driver to achieve it.

We need to give capacity building through training of staff and volunteers, especially young people, a priority, and we need to develop a framework of common standards and sample tools and documentation. The YMCA Universities Network has the potential to play a role in providing common standards, training and knowledge sharing.

Resource mobilisation is vital to the Movement's sustainability and to fulfilling the YMCA's potential to empower youth and transform communities. The World Alliance and all Area Alliances have created a coordinated strategy for YMCA resource mobilisation at the local, national, regional and global levels. National Movements have contributed to shaping this strategy, and it has been tested in all regions of the world. Considerable progress has been made during this first phase.

2: Programmes and Advocacy

The YMCA is well positioned to bring about change in a world that is challenged by injustice and poverty that have such a high impact on the lives of so many of the world's young people. The YMCA's mission statement, Challenge 21, conveys a clear message of solidarity with the oppressed and a commitment to justice, and paves the way for the implementation of relevant programmes that meet the needs of young people.

YMCA style advocacy

The World Alliance takes a wide definition of advocacy, including awareness raising, training, leadership development, as well as lobbying and campaigning.

Advocacy should arise from our experience of delivering programmes that are relevant to the needs of young people. Since our advocacy work arises out of our experience of working with young people, this gives the YMCA particular credibility and ability to influence policy making that relates to young people.

In order to build the quality of advocacy, the YMCA's programmes and advocacy should be measurable, contextual and evidence based, so that our programmes are relevant and effective and our policy engagement is substantiated by our findings and experience.

Humanitarian intervention

YMCAs across the world do seek to respond to emergencies and to meet the needs of the communities they already serve in such situations. Even if we are not an emergency-response based organisation, we need to foresee future events whose occurrence is likely to worsen the lives of our children and young people. The more prepared we are for disasters, the more mission-relevant our potential interventions can be.

Youth voice

Our young people have made it clear that they want their voice to be heard at all levels within the Movement and that our programmes should be focussed on the needs of young people. At the same time, young people should be central in developing our programmes and advocacy, and we need to ensure that young people are given the training and capacity in order to participate most effectively. ‘Nothing about us without us’.

3: Communications and Branding

The World Alliance uses a wide range of print, multimedia and web based tools to communicate its work, and share resources (including good practices and training materials). The World Alliance communications strategy was recently updated to support resource mobilisation efforts; this resulted in the production of a new annual report, and re-launch of the website.

There is interest and willingness in the movement to further improve communications, particularly with relation to branding, and communicating the YMCA’s impact. Since 2008 the World Alliance has been exploring the case for a global YMCA brand (brand is understood to encompass messaging, perception, reputation and visual identity). Some YMCA National Movements and Area Alliances are already engaged in their own brand processes, but would still like to explore the possibility for a global effort.

How can we work together globally to help every YMCA increase its visibility, and improve its perception?

Concrete recommendations included: the development of global messages on critical issues affecting youth, by consulting with youth; and creating a global YMCA task group on branding to assess the current situation and help develop a global branding strategy.

The President thanked the Writing Team for the comprehensive Report and asked for a motion to adopt it.

The Report was moved for adoption by Chris Roles, seconded by Samuel Stephens (India)

Resolution 6: The 17th World Council of YMCAs adopted the Report of the Writing Group.

Discussions and Comments on Report

Dr. Park Jai Chang, Korea, said that two things were missing in the Report: 1) what is to be done; and 2) strategies to achieve recommendations therein.

In response, Chris Roles explained that in the Section of the Report on Programmes and Advocacy, a considerable interest in the context of Global Citizenship has been expressed and that it is for the Executive Committee of the World Alliance to reflect on the issues raised and map out strategies for implementing the recommendations. He added that certain aspects of the Report captured in general terms what needs to be done.

On the statement, that “branding is not about logo”, a participant called for clarification because according to him, branding is also about logo. Chris Roles explained that though logo is important, it is not the first thing to consider in the branding process - perception and reputation management are very important.

Another contributor suggested that the centrality of Christ in the mission of the YMCA as stated in the Paris Basis and Challenge 21, must be clearly expressed in the final document.

Martin Bauer, Switzerland, said he was impressed about the presentation of the Report and congratulated the Writing Team on the work done.

A participant from the YWCA-YMCA indicated that the new Executive Committee will be challenged to prioritise the various ideas which have come up during the Council.

Another participant suggested that proposals by the Executive Committee to the World Council should be made available in advance to enable National Movements discuss them before the World Council.

It was explained that the World Council is the highest decision-making body and that it is at the World Council that issues are discussed and reports are made to inform participants and enable them to make informed decisions.

Dr. Emmanuel Osafo, Ghana, signified that the point to recognise the Coalition of YMCA Universities as a resource centre to support the various YMCA training programmes had not been included.

Chris Roles responded that the recommendation by the YMCA Universities Network came too late to be incorporated before the presentation and indicated that in the final preparation of the Report the recommendation would be considered for inclusion.

Concluding the discussion, President Martin Meißner thanked the Writing Team for their hard work which had culminated in such a comprehensive report.

Resolutions

The President reminded participants of the Rules of Procedure for official meetings, governing the discussion, voting and adoption of resolutions at the World Council as enshrined in the By-Laws and reproduced on pages 50 to 52 of the 17th World Council Workbook (see Appendix 15 for text of Resolutions adopted at the 17th World Council).

Message and Statement from the International Youth Forum (IYF)

The Message from the International Youth Forum was introduced by Maria Cristina Miranda, Philippines, and read out by IYF representatives. The Message contained the following recommendations to the World Alliance:

Response to Challenge 21 Issues

Related to Challenge 21 and the Millennium Development Goals, we propose an increased emphasis on engaging youth in, and building capacity for:

- i. Education, both formal and informal
- ii. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
- iii. Combating HIV/AIDS
- iv. Mitigating the effects of environmental degradation
- v. Coordinating local, regional, and global disaster relief efforts
- vi. Promoting gender equity
- vii. An accelerated response to drug-related issues at all income levels.

Movement Strengthening

- As a Christian movement, we recommend strengthening the “C” in the YMCA through diverse initiatives dedicated to the physical, mental, and spiritual development of youth.
- We ask for a concerted effort to develop a year-round, global YMCA community by harnessing the power of technology, and enhancing our brand identity as the world’s largest youth movement, through further development of the ELGG social network model (YMCA Global Online Community) and strategically targeting internal and external collaborative partnerships.

International Youth Forum (IYF) Development

With the continued support of the World Alliance, we request the strengthening of the Youth Steering Committee by establishing a Task Force for the purposes of evaluating previous Youth Forums and identifying strategies for future events, through the representation of the Youth Committee Members of the World Alliance.

We claim the ideals put forth by this forum, that we are “not subjects but citizens,” and there is “nothing about us without us.”

The recommendations were moved by Maria Cristina Miranda; seconded for adoption by Oliver Jia Wen Loke, Singapore.

Discussion and Comments

- On the recommendation that “the Steering Committee of the IYF be strengthened”, it was proposed that instead of the Steering Committee, the Youth Committee which is the standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the World Alliance should rather be strengthened.

The youth accepted the amendment and the recommendation was amended accordingly.

- On the recommendation calling for the strengthening of the “C” in YMCA, Patricia Pelton, Canada, cautioned that in stressing the Christian mission of the YMCA, care must be taken not to promote exclusiveness; that YMCA should be inclusive in all its operations.

Samuel Stephens, India, explained that the recommendation does not in any way connote any exclusiveness. He highlighted the importance of the Christian of the YMCA and the contemporary interpretation of its mission as expressed in Challenge 21.

The President explained that recommendations made at the World Council are directed at the World Alliance and that such recommendations are not binding on National Movements.

The youth agreed to a suggestion to include the full meaning of the acronym ELGG in their statement.

Resolution 7: The 17th World Council of YMCAs unanimously voted to accept the Youth Statement and the recommendations therein, as amended.

Youth Representation in World Council Voting Process

The youth tabled a resolution calling for a review of the voting procedures at the World Council to give greater representation of young people as voting delegates by National Movements with more than one vote.

The resolution was moved by Sofia Laborde Fernández, Uruguay, seconded by Daniel Vives Rivero, Peru.

The President explained that the issue being raised can at best be a recommendation to National Movements and not a resolution.

A representative of YM-YWCA Switzerland supported the resolution by saying that the resolution challenges National Movements to make the youth part of decision making as a demonstration of their commitment towards making the youth citizens rather than subjects.

Bob Nicholson, Australia, informed the gathering that YMCA Australia had already implemented this in its national movement where the youth are included in their voting delegates.

A representative of the YMCAs of Philippines supported the suggestion that the resolution should be a recommendation to National Movements to ensure youth involvement in decision making and that it should not be seen as a call for a constitutional amendment.

Resolution 8: The 17th World Council of YMCAs unanimously accepted the Resolution as a recommendation to National Movements.

YMCA Hoop Springs Eternal

YMCA England presented a resolution to organize a global YMCA basket ball event during the 2012 Olympic Games in London, England.

The resolution was moved by Ian Green, seconded by Maria Cristina Miranda

Discussion and Comments

A youth participant from the USA enquired if there is an arrangement to encourage the participation of disabled persons. The answer was affirmative.

An amendment was proposed and accepted to include Paralympics in the 1st paragraph of the Resolution to read “..... Olympic and Paralympics Games of 2012....”

Hiromi Nagao, Japan, suggested that as a public relations strategy, YMCA England should, during the event, put emphasis on the fact of the game of basketball having been invented in the YMCA.

The President responded that that information was already on the World Alliance website.

Romulo Dantas, Brazil, said the proposed event is a great idea and hoped that in future the game of volleyball would also be considered.

Resolution 9: The 17th World Council of YMCAs unanimously carried the Resolution on YMCA Hoop Springs Eternal.

YMCA Global Citizens: Acting and Advocating for Climate Justice

The Resolution was proposed by YWCA-YMCA Sweden and supported by the YMCAs of Belarus, New Zealand, and YMCA-YWCA Denmark.

The Resolution was moved by YW-YMCA of Sweden; seconded by Sofía Laborde Fernández.

Discussion and Comments

Bart Shaha commented on the section of the Resolution which called for the participation of the World Alliance in global Climate Change advocacy programmes. The World Alliance is already actively participating in climate change issues; currently working closely with the Alliance of Youth CEOs to develop a joint guide entitled “Take Action Now” on climate change; and already involved in and will participate in the upcoming Conference on Climate Change to be held in Mexico in November 2010.

An amendment was proposed and accepted to change the sentence, “...the World Alliance should be strengthened...” to read, “We call upon the World Alliance to further strengthen the platform of advocacy issues related to climate change and making sure that youth ...”

It was also suggested that the Resolution should include a line encouraging national movements to look inward to develop programmes in support of climate change and also to call on people to reduce their own emissions.

Jean Bassene, Senegal, pointed out that the issue of climate change is very crucial for the rural dwellers in Africa where desertification is threatening the very livelihoods of people, especially youth. He added that if efforts were not made to protect the environment, many of Africa’s youth will be forced to seek greener pastures in Europe. He therefore supported the resolution.

Resolution 10: The 17th World Council of YMCAs unanimously carried the Resolution on YMCA Global Citizens: Acting and Advocating for Climate Justice.

Alternative Tourism

The resolution, which was presented by YMCA Korea; called for the promotion of alternative tourism by the YMCA movement and for the World Alliance to set up a Task Group on Alternative Tourism.

The Resolution was moved by Nam Boo Wan, Korea; seconded by Kohei Yamada, APAY.

Simon Kouba	East Jerusalem
Sofía Laborde Fernández	Uruguay
Courtney Lawrence	USA
Leopoldo Moacir Lima	Brazil
Uku-Rasmus Lind	Estonia
Oliver Jia Wen Loke	Singapore
Ethel Mashekwa	Zambia
Vezihlahla Mncwango	South Africa
Hiromi Nagao	Japan
Ian Pearson	England
Patricia Pelton	Canada
Sandra Pyke- Anthony	Trinidad & Tobago
Ghassan Sayah	Lebanon
Daniel Vives Rivero	Peru
Lucy Wanjiru	Kenya
Michael Will	Scotland

Paul Le Gros expressed appreciation to Suzanne Watson and Claude-Alain Danthe, World Alliance, for their assistance and to those who supported the work of the Committee.

President Martin Meißner thanked the Chair and Members of the Elections Committee for the task performed.

Constitutional Amendment

The President explained the rationale behind the Constitutional amendment (see Appendix 16) being proposed. According to him, the amendment is to enable the World Alliance, which is headquartered in Switzerland, to be in conformity with Swiss Laws. He moved for the adoption of the Constitutional amendment, and was seconded by Hiromi Nagao (Japan).

A participant enquired whether the proposal for the amendment had been circulated to national movements at least six/ten (6/10) months prior to the World Council, as stipulated by the Constitution. Martin Meißner confirmed that this provision had been complied with.

Resolution 12: The 17th World Council of YMCAs unanimously adopted the Amendment to Article XVI of the Constitution of the World Alliance of YMCAs.

Invitation to the International YMCA Festival in Sweden in 2014

The YWCA-YMCA of Sweden made a presentation on the International YMCA Festival they plan to organize in the City of Umea in 2014. The objective is to bring at least 10,000 participants to Sweden to celebrate through sports (basketball, volleyball, etc) and workshops to discuss issues around migration, HIV/AIDS, etc. The Swedish YW-YMCA Movement then launched a special invitation to YMCA National Movements to participate. The President thanked the Swedish YW-YMCA Movement for the presentation and the invitation to the YMCA family.

Report on the Appointment of the new Secretary General

The President, in presenting the report, explained that Dr. Bart Shaha having served his second term as Secretary General, the Executive Committee of the World Alliance appointed a Search Committee with himself as the Chair, to look for an appropriate replacement.

The Search Committee had its first meeting in March 2009 and it was agreed that a letter be written to all member National Movements inviting applications. According to him the initial responses received were too small thereby necessitating the re-opening of the requests for applications. The Committee eventually received a total of five (5) applications out of which two (2) candidates were shortlisted. The two shortlisted candidates were interviewed on 26th February 2010 in Geneva. The Search Committee agreed that the contents of the interview should be kept confidential. He mentioned that the two candidates interviewed were highly qualified. The Search Committee then recommended for the approval of the Executive Committee, the appointment, as Secretary General of the World Alliance of YMCAs, of Rev. Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, the General Secretary of YMCA Europe.

The President moved for the adoption of the report, seconded by Sandy McIntyre (Canada).

Resolution 13: The 17th World Council of YMCAs unanimously adopted the recommendation of the Executive Committee to appoint Rev. Johan Vilhelm Eltvik as the new Secretary General of the World Alliance.

It was noted that the new Secretary General will take up office with effect from 1st January 2011.

In Memoriam

The Secretary General, Bart Shaha, invited the gathering to observe a minute of silence in remembrance of those YMCA members who had departed this world in the last four years. He called Rev. Samuel Stephens to pray for the repose of the departed souls among whom was Mr. Yip Kok Choong, the former General Secretary of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs.

Recognition of outgoing President and Secretary General

Outgoing President

Rev. Samuel Stephens expressed, on behalf of the World Alliance, deep appreciation to Martin Meißner for his commitment and excellent leadership to the world YMCA Movement. He stated that the YMCA Movement is “richer to-day as a result of Martin’s amazing leadership.” He extended the same appreciation to his wife Gudrun, for providing the needed support to him during his time as President.

On behalf of the World Alliance of YMCAs, Rev. Samuel Stephens, presented a Plaque to Martin Meißner in recognition of his leadership and moved for his appointment as an Honorary Life Member, seconded by Hiromi Nagao (Japan).

Resolution 14: The 17th World Council of YMCAs unanimously approved the designation of Mr. Martin Meißner, the Immediate Past President of the World Alliance, as Honorary Life Member.

Martin Meißner thanked God for His support during his period as President of World Alliance. He paid tribute to Bart Shaha, the Secretary General, and to Rev. Samuel Stephens, Deputy President, and Fernando Ondarza, Treasurer, for their cooperation and assistance.

Outgoing Secretary General

Martin Meißner in turn expressed his appreciation and that of the World Alliance to Dr. Bart Shaha for his dedication and commitment to the work of the YMCA. Describing him as the architect and engineer of the Global Operating Plan (GOP), he said that he had been a blessing to the world YMCA and traced his career path from Bangladesh where he was the General Secretary, through Hong Kong as Secretary for Leadership Development and then as the Executive Secretary for Global Programmes and Communications at the World Alliance followed by the position of General Secretary of the Asia and Pacific Alliance, to Geneva as the Secretary General of the World Alliance.

He presented a plaque of recognition from the World Alliance and a commemorative pin from the YMCA of Germany in recognition of his outstanding service to the World Alliance. He also called for the recognition of his wife Emily, for standing solidly behind her husband in all his endeavours.

Martin Meißner then moved for the appointment of Bart Shaha as an Honorary Life Member, seconded by Rev. Samuel Stephens (India).

Resolution 15: The 17th World Council of YMCAs unanimously approved the designation of Dr. Bartholomew Shaha, the outgoing Secretary General, as Honorary Life Member.

Bart Shaha thanked all for their support and said though he comes from a family of eleven brothers and sisters he has gained a larger family through his involvement in the YMCA. He said he considered his work in the YMCA as a calling and appreciated the support of all, especially his wife and two daughters. He invited all staff and colleagues at the World Alliance to the stage for recognition and expressed his appreciation to all of them for their high sense of duty and commitment.

Release of “Journey in Mission” Book

Martin Meißner officially released “Journey In Mission”, a collection of articles and reflections of Bart Shaha during his tenure as Secretary General of the World Alliance and invited all to collect complimentary copies after the session.

Martin Meißner then invited the Incoming President Kenneth Colloton and the new Secretary General Rev. Johan Vilhelm Eltvik to the stage to present their vision to the plenary.

Acceptance Speech from the New President, Ken Colloton

Before commencing his address, Ken Colloton invited the newly elected Officers and Members of the Executive Committee of the World Alliance as well as the Area Presidents to join him on the stage. He began his address by paying glowing tribute to the two YMCAs of Hong Kong and the many volunteers for their excellent hosting and for making the 17th World Council a huge success. He also appreciated the work of the outgoing Secretary General and the Officers and Members of the immediate past Executive Committee for their dedication and service to the world movement.

Colloton also recalled that “every day we are witness to economical, religious, political, gender and age injustices. Every day, we do God’s work to help the meek, the poor in spirit, those who hunger and thirst and those who are persecuted. Our Christian heritage and identity provides the guiding framework for strengthening values and ethics, increasing inclusion and interfaith dialogue and positively transforming local and global communities.”

Speaking about the future of the global YMCA Movement he said “now is the time that our global organisation speaks with one articulate voice on behalf of our global presence and communicates the good work being done by the Area Alliances and National Movements. Now is the time that our movement understands our global strengths and priorities and we develop common language and positioning to advocate for ourselves. Now is the time for our young adults to take a greater leadership role in our global affairs...Now is the time that the global Movement sets an example around women leadership and participation.

Colloton concluded by saying that “our YMCA was founded in 1844. The YMCA’s leadership, innovation, support and expansion over the last 166 years has resulted in a global Movement that is physically positioned and advantaged over all other NGOs. YMCAs can aspire to be one of the most recognized and valued international human services organisations that we can be... May we go forward as one.” (See Appendix 17 for full text).

Acceptance Speech from the new Secretary General, Rev. Johan Vilhelm Eltvik

The new Secretary General Johan Vilhelm Eltvik shared some of the experiences that had shaped his vision, and taught him important lessons, particularly that “each and every YMCA is rooted in its own culture and values, and in its own history.” He recalled that “The Paris Basis gives us a strong Christian foundation and the ecumenical perspective. The Kampala Principles and Challenge 21 give us the wide overview of the social change and programmatic priorities the YMCA shall implement worldwide according to local needs.”

He went on to affirm that “In January 2008 a representative group of global YMCA leaders confirmed very strongly that our focus is on youth. I am totally dedicated to that. The agenda I envision recognises that the YMCA can only reach its potential to empower youth and transform communities if it is four things: socially relevant; fully capable of achieving impact; highly visible and admired; and financially strong. In other words, this agenda is the agenda of our Global Operating Plan for Movement Strengthening, and of Resource Mobilisation.

Eltvik concluded by saying that “John R. Mott and his team had given the YMCA vision and strength and in this way made it ready to face the huge challenges of their time. Now, dear friends, it is our time!” (see Appendix 18 for full text).

Acknowledgements

Martin Meißner and Bart Shaha took turns to call a number of personalities for recognition for the various roles in the organization and hosting of the 17th World Council in Hong Kong. These included Mr. Yau Chung Wan, Chair of the Host Committee; Mr. Chuck Allison; Dr. Lawrence Yick; Mr. Richard Kaing; Rev. Terry McArthur; Mr. Bob Tobin; Dr. M. D. David (historian and compiler of the YMCA History Book); all Resource Persons, Members of the Host Committee, Volunteers and Staff of Wu Kwai Sha YMCA Youth Village, the Steering Committee of the International Youth Forum, Interpreters, the Communication Team, the Official Photographer and Videographer.

Concluding Remarks

In his concluding remarks to close the 17th World Council, Martin Meißner, outgoing President, quoted Psalm 121: “I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who

keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and for evermore.” He thanked God for the past years and for the next years saying, “we know that we are in Your hands!”

Bart Shaha on his part rendered his concluding remarks through a poem where he shared his life-long journey, appreciating the warmth of friendship, care and love he received from YMCA and other friends all around the world, and expressing thanks to the YMCA.

Closing Worship

As part of the Closing Worship, the outgoing President led the newly elected President, Secretary General, Officers and Members of the Executive Committee to take the oath of office. He then thanked all the immediate past Members of the Executive Committee for their service to the World Alliance.

Adjournment of the 17th World Council of YMCAs

Martin Meißner at this stage officially adjourned the 17th World Council of YMCAs and handed over all responsibilities to the Incoming President, Kenneth Colloton. In accepting the responsibilities, Mr Ken Colloton thanked Mr. Martin Meißner for his leadership and all for their participation and wished everyone a safe journey back home.

Recorded by James Ekow Rhule, YMCA Ghana; David Bennison and Mark Harrod (YMCA England).