



## **THE TAICHUNG COMMITMENT OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**We**, the participants of the Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on “Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response” organised by CWM and PCT with technical assistance of ACT Alliance representing the member churches of CWM: PCI, EKT, NCC, PCM, UCPNG, GPM, CCCS, CCCAS, CUNZ, PCANZ, PCK, PCT and Ecumenical Partners PCI, NCCK, PCC, UCCJ, CASA, Person To Person, ACT Alliance, came together from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 in Taichung, Taiwan, to:

- ❖ reflect upon and express our concern about the growing incidents of Disasters which threatens the Life in Fullness
- ❖ deepen our understanding from theological and country specific perspectives of Disaster and Emergency preparedness
- ❖ learn from and listen to one another’s experiences in this field
- ❖ strive to evolve a strategy to empower the churches in these regions to take up this issue and concern.

**We realized** that we live in a world that is becoming more and more prone to disasters than it ever was before. Whether they are natural or human induced, there is no escaping the fact that disasters are harmful to and destructive of life. In response therefore to the life-threatening effects of disasters, the Church as the Body of Christ in the world must be reminded of its calling and its duty to be God’s life giving agent in the world and for the world.

**We understood** that Jesus has taught us that not only has he come to bring life abundantly to the world, but he has also come to destroy that which threatens the renewal and sustainability of life (cf John 10.10). It is therefore the responsibility of all human beings, and specifically the Church as a collective body, to be proactive in protecting life and eliminating that which is harmful to life.

**We gained deeper understanding** that God being the author and sustainer of life; it is for love of life that God created everything. It follows therefore that human stewardship must take as its primary objective the giving and furtherance of life in the world. Every human being has a right to life and the church must advocate and ensure that this God-given right is secured for everyone and everything.

**We affirmed** that humans are made in the image and likeness of God and we are called to a distinctive shared responsibility for respectful care for the environment. We recognize that we are stewards **within** creation, and not as being separate from it.

**We understood** that because of human greed for wealth and consumption, we have placed dominion over the environment and have caused continued depletion of natural resources and irreversible damage to the ecosystems.

**We re-looked into the Scriptures** and were reminded of the call to the Church to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God with the hope of being agents of peace and seeking justice in establishing the reign of God.

**We are then challenged** to be biased for the survivors of disasters and not be neutral as we seek to restore their dignity and create a space for them in the mainstream of the Church and Society.

**We regret** that many churches have been silent spectators to the violence perpetrated against the marginalised and the ecosystem. We can no longer afford to provide charity and service to those at the margins without addressing the roots causes, breaking down the systemic structural injustices, economic, social, political, religious and cultural.

**We gained deeper understanding** at this workshop of the context of the vulnerable population in the region. We have together analysed the root causes for that put them at risk and have worked out suggestions for strategic interventions to address these issues within our churches and communities in the Asia Pacific Region and also have recommendations for the global CWM to address the growing concern.

**We solemnly affirm** that the Church:

- Must break the culture of silence and bear its prophetic ministry by being the voice of the voiceless
- Must and should work towards affirming life in its fullness of the vulnerable and the affected
- Must protect the dignity of survivors of disasters.
- Must share God's love in seeing broken lives healed and restored.
- Oppose the "Spirit of times" of free market, consumerism, materialism and commodification.
- Must treat the vulnerable and the affected as human beings who need care and protection, whose rights should be protected and their dignity restored.
- Must understand and give space to the affected to be listened and to participate in the decisions concerning them.

**We therefore propose** that:

- The Church, in keeping with her prophetic ministry, must move from charity, going beyond development to transformative action and must include Disaster Preparedness and Response in her missional agenda
- The Church should re-read the Bible from the perspective of the exploited, taking their sides and not be neutral and must develop resources on disaster preparedness including Biblical, interfaith and trauma counseling for the use of communities.
- CWM must work with likeminded organisations and individuals to advocate at governmental and international level for effective policy and implementation of the different laws and Conventions to protect the rights of the affected
- The Church must address this issue at local levels, equip its congregations, women's and youth groups, pastors and reach to the larger community with an inter-faith approach.
- Enhanced cooperative actions with member churches and the ecumenical family
- The first step at the local levels must involve in awareness, training and implementing disaster preparedness in each congregations

## **Annex**

CCCS	Congregational Christian Church in Samoa
CUNZ	Congregational Union of New Zealand
CWM	Council for World Mission
EKT	Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu
GPM	Gereja Presbyterian Malaysia
KUC	Kiribati Uniting Church
NCC	Nauru Congregational Church
PCANZ	Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
PCI	Presbyterian Church of India
PCK	Presbyterian Church of Korea
PCM	Presbyterian Church of Myanmar
PCT	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
UCPNG	United Church in Papua New Guinea
PCV	Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
NCKK	National Council of Churches in Korea
PCC	Pacific Conferences of Churches
UCCJ	United Church of Christ in Japan
CASA	Church Auxiliary for Social Action
ACT Alliance	Action of Churches Together Alliance