



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION: THE ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

We are impelled by our faith in Christ to lead just lives and to confront unjust structures, practices and attitudes that deprive human beings of their dignity, and to offer alternative visions based on our understandings of the Holy Scripture.

“Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.” (Is 1:17)

Today, the poor and oppressed have grown to daunting numbers and conflict and tension cause untold suffering in many regions. As representatives of churches and related organizations, we believe that by working together and by focusing our efforts, we will be better able to challenge powers and principalities which have failed to create conditions in which all of God’s children can live in peace, justice, and dignity.

Ecumenical Advocacy

Thus, we come together as members of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance:

- Centered in our **understanding** of the Gospel message which calls all Christians to speak out against injustice, tyranny, and war; to promote human rights for all; and to speak for an alternative vision of a world where all live in peace, security, and dignity;
- Grounded in our **commitment** to justice, peace, environmental integrity, and the dignity of all human beings;
- Based on an **inclusive vision of witness** as encompassing analysis and action;
- Rooted in our commitment that **marginalized communities** themselves must be at the center of ecumenical advocacy being their own advocates, and that the advocacy efforts of others are an expression of solidarity with and accountability to those who suffer from the world’s injustices and violence;
- Committed to **learning from churches** and their organizations as they are engaged in advocacy as part of their ministry;
- Ensuring that the work of the Alliance will **complement and enhance** work being done or planned by the World Council of Churches and members of the Alliance.

We commit ourselves to strengthening the churches’ collective life through:

- Ecumenical advocacy as **a specific form of witness** on political, economic, cultural and social issues by churches and their members, church-related agencies and other organizations which aims to influence policies and practices of governments, international institutions, corporations and our own communities in order to bring about a more just, peaceful and sustainable world.

We will work together by:

- **Promoting change** to enable all human beings to live in justice and peace, and by **identifying, exposing and confronting structures of power, practices and attitudes** which cause injustice and suffering;

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- Engage the full partnership of **women**, recognizing the particular resources which they bring, and challenging gender based injustices and practices;
Carrying out efforts on **different levels**, both at the level of policy and practices (for example, from challenging a local landowner to lobbying at the World Trade Organization);
- Envisioning the Alliance as a tool that supports **sustainability** in our development efforts and thus helps to protect earth's resources for our children and further generations;
- Sustaining a **process** rather than a one-time campaign, although campaigns may be an important part of advocacy;
- Acting through a **variety of instruments and methodologies** at different levels, which may include lobbying, education, capacity building, and demonstrations.

By working together within the Alliance, **we commit ourselves:**

- 1. To promote approaches to political, economic, social and cultural issues based on a shared commitment to the Gospel and concern for those people who suffer from injustice.**
- 2. To confront unjust structures, practices and attitudes and to offer alternative visions and strategies, based on the analysis and engagement of the people affected.**
- 3. To raise awareness within our own churches, communities, constituencies and the public at large on issues of common concern, and to mobilize support for specific campaigns or collective actions as proposed by the strategy groups.**
- 4. To share information with one another, to provide resources, and to contribute actively and creatively in implementing common approaches at the local, national, and international levels.**
- 5. To continue to reflect theologically on this work.**

The dignity of the excluded is central to the Gospel of Christ. The Christ whom we seek to follow stands with those who suffer from injustice,

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” (Matthew 25)

The calling to engage in advocacy is not a task we take up when it is convenient, but is a fundamental requirement of living out our faith.

By signing this document, we indicate our request for membership, support for and participation in the work of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance.

(please print name of church or church-related organization as you wish it to appear)

(authorized signature)

(date)

(please print name and title of authorized signatory)